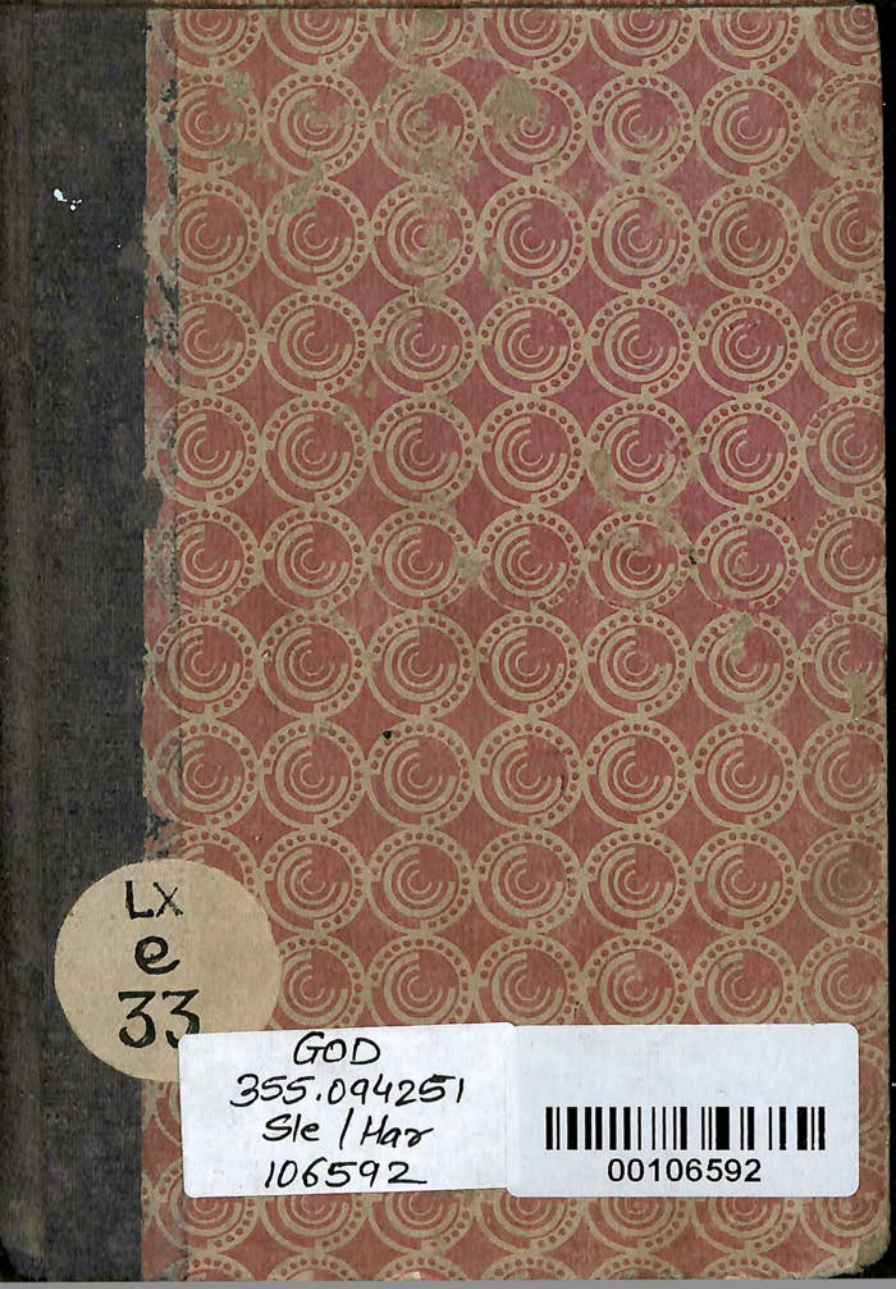
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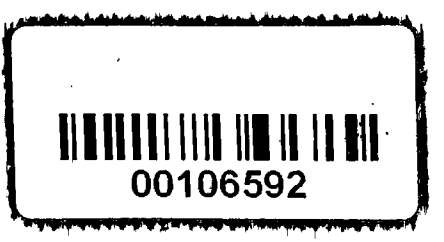

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THE 2ND BATTALION DERBYSHIRE REGIMENT IN TIRAH.

"Lest we forget."

BRIGADIER-GENERAL SIR R. C. HART, V.C., K.C.B.
Commanding 1st Brigade, Tirah Expeditionary Force.

[*Frontispiece.*

THE DERBYSHIRE CAMPAIGN SERIES.

No. 5

The 2nd Battalion Derbyshire Regiment in Tirah

106592

BY

CAPTAIN A. K. SLESSOR,

2ND BATTALION DERBYSHIRE REGIMENT,

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

BRIGADIER-GENERAL SIR R. C. HART, V.C., K.C.B

LATE COMMANDING 1ST BRIGADE, TIRAH FIELD FORCE.

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"Lest we forget."

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PREFACE.

THE following account of the experiences of the 2nd Battalion Derbyshire Regiment in the Tirah Expedition of the winter of 1897-98, constitutes the fifth, and up to the present, the last number of the "Derbyshire Campaign Series." The present number differs chiefly from those preceding it in that the Campaign it attempts to describe is of quite recent occurrence. Whilst it is no doubt of the utmost assistance to be able to write of events still fresh in memory, yet this very fact is not without corresponding drawbacks in the restrictions which must be imposed upon a military writer by a consideration of the fact that almost all the principal actors in the scenes described are still on the active list of the army. Criticism of the action of superior officers, needless to say, forms no part of the object with which this

Campaign Series was instituted. Nevertheless, to give a mere bald collection of incidents without any attempt to explain their sequence and purpose, would, it is believed, be to deprive the narrative of half its interest; and in the effort to make the general plan intelligible it is not always easy altogether to avoid some expression of opinion.

It may reasonably be doubted whether any account of a campaign, more especially a contemporary account, ever contains the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. In the first place the incidents of any particular engagement often cover so large an area, and succeed one another with such bewildering rapidity, that no one person of those who witness or take part in it is able as a rule to give more than a very limited account of what took place. The most cool-headed and intelligent observer at best can but relate what fell within the scope of his own immediate experience. Consequently it often happens that two men who took part in the same action will give absolutely different accounts of it, and the only way to arrive at a tolerably correct version is by a

comparison of a large variety of observations. Again, military commanders are no less liable than the rest of humanity to error. They may act according to the best of their ability and judgment at the time, but subsequent events may prove that the line they took was the wrong one. Mistakes must in the nature of things be made, by highest and lowest alike, which in the interests not only of discipline, but also of common courtesy and consideration, it is as well not to dwell upon unnecessarily. Moreover, in the heat and stress of action men's passions may be too fiercely aroused, or their fears unduly excited, and incidents occur which can only become impossible when mankind ceases to be liable to sudden fits of fury or panic, and which it is far more politic to gloss over than to drag into open light, *coram populo*, and thus give the enemy occasion to blaspheme.

This number of the Campaign Series has suffered an irreparable loss in the death of the late Colonel Sir Robert Warburton, who had very kindly consented to write the introductory chapter. A life-long experience of the Frontier

Tribes, and the unbounded personal influence which his relationship with some of their Chiefs no doubt assisted him to exert among them, would have added an immense interest and authority to his explanation and discussion of the causes which led up to their revolt against the British rule. Upon his decease application was made to our Brigadier in the Campaign, Major-General Sir Reginald Hart, V.C., K.C.B., late Director of Military Education in India, of whom the Regiment will ever retain most grateful remembrances, as the most fitting substitute; and he very kindly consented to step into the breach, and wrote for us the valuable introduction with which the number opens.

Many and various are the sources from which the mass of information required to compile the succeeding account of the Tirah Campaign has been drawn. First and foremost large contributions have been levied upon the consecutive description written by Major Wylly for the columns of the Regimental paper, *I'm Ninety-five*, and entitled, "With the 2nd Battalion Derbyshire Regiment in Tirah"; also upon the

writings of other officers of the Regiment in that paper. Captain and Quarter-master H. J. Riddell took infinite pains to furnish many interesting details with regard to transport, supplies, equipment and other kindred subjects. The story of the first stage of the Campaign, up to the departure of the Regiment from Mastura Camp, is based principally on the personal recollections, aided by a copious diary, of the writer, who had the misfortune to be invalided from there, and accordingly could only give the latter part of the narrative from hearsay and the descriptions of others. The editors of the *United Service Magazine* and *Macmillan's Magazine* have been good enough to allow articles, written by officers of the Regiment and published by them, to be reproduced in whole or in part here. The official despatches and a large collection of newspaper cuttings, chiefly from the Indian *Pioneer* and *The Times*, have been liberally quoted or otherwise made use of. The following works have also been freely consulted and occasionally quoted: *The Risings on the North-West Frontier 1897-1898*, compiled from the special war correspondence of the

Pioneer, and published by the *Pioneer* Press; *Lockhart's Advance through Tirah*, by Captain L. J. Shadwell, and *The Campaign in Tirah, 1897-1898*, by Colonel H. D. Hutchinson.

The map of Tirah is one which was originally prepared for another purpose under the direction of Colonel H. D. Hutchinson, Director of Military Education in India, who has been good enough to give permission for its reproduction here. The illustrations are taken from original sketches kindly supplied by Major Martin, 1st Gurkhas, and Captain Maurice, of the Regiment.

As the object of this book is only to relate the doings and experiences of the Derbyshire Regiment, only those parts of the Campaign are touched upon in which they were concerned.

A. K. SLESSOR, *Captain*,
2nd Derbyshire Regiment.

SHORNCLIFFE,
July, 1899.

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CALENDAR OF THE CAMPAIGN.

FROM BAREILLY TO SHINAWARI.

1897.

Sept. 19. The 2nd Battalion Derbyshire Regiment received orders at Bareilly to mobilise and join Reserve Brigade of the Tirah Field Force at Rawal Pindi.

„ 22. Battalion left Bareilly.

„ 23. Halt for the day at the Rest Camp, Umballa.

„ 24. Halt for the day at the Rest Camp, Mian Mir.

„ 25. Arrived 9.0 a.m. at Rawal Pindi.

„ 28. Ordered to Kohat to relieve Royal Irish in First Brigade; left by rail 8.0 p.m.

„ 29. Arrived 7.0 a.m at Kushalgarh. Marched out 7.45 p.m.

„ 30. Marched into Gumbat 2.30 a.m., 17 miles; marched out 7.30 p.m. Arrived Kohat midnight, 15 miles.

Oct. 3. Left Kohat for Usterzai, 14 miles; arrived 2.30 p.m.

„ 4. Usterzai to Hangu, 13 miles.

„ 5. Hangu to Kai, 5.0 a.m. to 11.0 a.m., 15 miles.

„ 6. Kai to Shinawari, 6 miles.

„ 8. "B" Company with details arrived.

DARGAI.

Oct. 20. Marched out from Shinawari with Second Division at 5.0 a.m. Action of Dargai. Occupied Narik Suk 3.30. Ordered to remain there.

„ 21. Rations arrived and were issued about noon.

„ 22. Great coats and blankets arrived.

DARGAI TO MASTURA.

Oct. 23. Marched down to Khorappa (Khangarbur), about 8 miles; arrived 4.30 p.m.

„ 24. General Hart arrived at Khorappa to take over command of First Brigade.

„ 25. Right half Battalion engaged in rear-guard action retiring from village of Ramadan. Camp attacked same evening.

„ 28. Advance to Ghandaki. Orders to attack the Sempagha Pass next day. Major Smith-Dorrien rejoined from leave.

„ 29. Capture of Sempagha Pass. Battalion occupied first artillery position before daybreak, opposite pass.

„ 30. Over the Sempagha at 5.30 p.m. to Mastura Valley.

„ 31. Capture of Arhanga Pass. Battalion ordered to remain with the First Brigade at Mastura.

AT MASTURA.

Nov. 4. Half Battalion, with Head Quarters, moved up to top of Sempagha Pass.

„ 9. Tents and heavy baggage arrived.

„ 13. Successful rear-guard fight under Major Smith-Dorrien. Captain Bowman wounded.

„ 25. 14 degrees of frost.

„ 27. Head Quarters and "H" Company moved down from Sempagha into Mastura. Tents and heavy kit sent back to Peshawar *via* Kohat.

Dec. 5. Orders received for First Brigade to move down Mastura Valley.

„ 6. Line of communications from Shinawari closed.

MASTURA TO JAMRUD.

Dec. 7. First Brigade marched down the river to Mishti Bazar; joined there by C, D, and F Companies from Sempagha.

Dec. 8. From Mishti Bazar to Haidal Khel, 10 miles.
„ 9. Expedition to Waran valley. To camp by 7.30 p.m. at Hissar, 3 miles below Haidal Khel.
„ 10. Seven mile march to Andkhel; one day's halt there.
„ 12. Passage of Sapri Pass, 11 miles long. Battalion bivouacked for night at Kwaja Khidda.
„ 13. To Mamanai, near Swai Kot; one day's halt.
„ 15. To Ilam Gudar, 10 miles.
„ 16. To Bara, 4 miles.
„ 18. Marched into Jamrud.

EXPEDITION UP THE BAZAR VALLEY.

Dec. 22. Orders for the First Division to march up the Khyber.
„ 24. From Jamrud to Lala China, First Brigade ordered to Bazar Valley.
„ 25. Over the Alachi Kotal to Karamna.
„ 26. Karamna to Burg. Half Battalion returned to Alachi to assist baggage guard.
„ 27. Destruction of Burg.
„ 28. Return to Karamna.
„ 29. To Ali Masjid.
„ 30. Back at Jamrud.

UP AND DOWN THE KHYBER.

1898.
Jan. 3. Battalion ordered to Ali Masjid.
„ 5. Marched up there.
„ 11. Back to Jamrud.
„ 27. Ali Masjid again.
„ 29. Futile trip to Chura, cattle-driving.
„ 31. Time-expired men left for Deolali.
Feb. 3. Draft arrived, 2 officers, 185 men.
„ 18. Severe storm in the Khyber.

March 3. Another draft arrived, 1 officer, 47 men.
„ 25. Yet another, 49 men.
„ 30. Battalion ordered back to Jamrud.
April 3. Orders to return to Bareilly.
„ 5. From Jamrud to Peshawar. Left same evening by train for Pindi, Mian Mir, Umballa.
„ 9. Marched into cantonments at Bareilly.

INTRODUCTION

BY

BRIGADIER-GENERAL SIR R. C. HART, V.C., K.C.B.

WHEN the 2nd Battalion Derbyshire Regiment conceived the idea of recording its military history, I deemed it a high compliment to be asked to associate my name with an undertaking that commends itself so greatly to my judgment as likely to promote and develop the study of war.

For many years I have been trying, but trying in vain, to discover some scheme that would induce all regimental officers to study regimental history willingly. Perhaps this new departure of the 2nd Battalion Derbyshire Regiment is a solution of my difficulty.

Many regiments have the most glorious and even romantic records, and all the necessary material on which to work, but I am not aware that they have written interesting and instructive military histories, recording

in detail, the part played by their regiments in the many wars and great battles that have been instrumental in building up and consolidating the British Empire.

Brief records in outline are not uncommon, but it is not enough to say that a regiment fought at Blenheim, or Fontenoy, or Dettingen, Badajos, Salamanca, or at Waterloo; we want to know all the details, and all about the deeds of valour that should be credited to the corps or to individual officers or men. I think regimental histories should contain narratives and anecdotes sufficiently thrilling and inspiring to arrest the attention of all readers. The style of the German official account of the Franco-German war, and of some regimental histories, should be avoided, as it savours of the dry-as-dust kind of literature.

I have sometimes asked regimental officers to tell me what the battalion had done at some great battle whose name was staring me in the face, but alas! they have not known, and were satisfied to feel proud of the fact that the battalion was there. I once asked a battalion to show me the books presented to them by

Napoleon, but no one had ever heard that Napoleon had made any such present, and yet the fact remains that he did so. It may be very difficult now to collect all the information regarding some of the earlier battles, or even regarding the regiment itself—for example, can any one say for certain how "the Buffs" got their name? Where is the famous mess-table of the 24th Regiment, upon which so many of its officers were laid out after Chillianwallah?

Not only the officers, but the rank and file, should know the history of their regiment, and be familiar with the names of officers and men who have greatly distinguished themselves in the past. It might be desirable to add brief biographies of officers who have served with distinction in the regiment or afterwards. Even if it adds appreciably to the cost, the regimental history should include suitable illustrations and portraits of very distinguished men who are no longer serving in the regiment. The perusal of tales of danger, of thrilling adventure, and of acts of valour must incite others to imitate the fine example of

those who are held up to honour. This, in its turn, gives rise to a healthy spirit of emulation that gains possession of all ranks, and makes the regiment invincible, and even if the battalion does not go on active service for many years, the warrior spirit is kept alive and is ready to flare up fiercely whenever the opportunity offers.

When in a "tight corner" an officer, or even a simple private soldier, has merely to call out—"Remember such and such a battle, or such and such a regimental hero," and every man is at once inspired with a determination to conquer or to die. Surely every man's heart in the old 57th Regiment would thrill with martial ardour at such a war-cry as—"Die-hards, remember Albuera!" That is to say, if they knew that "Colonel Inglis, twenty-two officers, and more than four hundred men, out of five hundred and seventy who had mounted the hill, fell in the 57th alone."

It should not be difficult to inspire men with a determination to offer the most self-devoted service, and to show themselves worthy representatives of their regiment, whose honour and

glory must always remain untarnished by any unworthy behaviour.

Does every man in the battalions concerned know all about the splendid courage displayed so calmly at the burning of the "Kent," at the burning of the "Sarah Sands," or at the wreck of the "Birkenhead"? We all believe that *esprit de corps* should be fostered in every way, but has all been done that can be done? Do we all apply in practice what Napoleon has said, that "in war the moral forces are to the physical as three to one"?

I shall always preserve an affectionate remembrance of the 2nd Battalion Derbyshire Regiment, which I had the honour to include in my Brigade throughout the trying operations of the Tirah Campaign of 1897-98, and I trust the substance of my farewell address will be recorded, and will sufficiently express my appreciation of the many good qualities of my late comrades.

I have been asked to state in this introduction, "What it was all about—what they killed each other for." But I really do not know! There was a state of war and unrest along

the frontier that induced the powerful Afridi and Orakzai tribes to wage an aggressive war against the British Government. Probably they counted upon the active support of their co-religionist, the Amir of Afghanistan, and hoped to force his hand. What they could hope to gain it was impossible to imagine, though what they might lose and suffer was very evident. It is certain that their priests traded upon their ignorance. The Afridis and Orakzais alleged certain grievances which should not alone have been sufficient to cause war, but they were submitted in the form of an ultimatum. Many people consider that the abandonment of the Khyber was *the* cause of the war — but what was the cause of the trouble in the Khyber?

Perhaps this brings in the whole complicated Chitral question.

Probably posterity will be content to know that many different causes combined to bring about hostilities, and that the matter was never clearly settled to any one's entire satisfaction. One thing is quite certain, the war became unpopular at home and the British public never

grasped the military situation and failed to appreciate the difficulties that were so successfully overcome by Gen. Sir William Lockhart. There is much to be learnt from a military history of the Tirah Campaign, and I assert on the authority of the greatest generals that no officer—no matter what his natural ability—can rise to distinction unless he studies and reflects deeply upon the lessons taught by history. Even the Heaven-born leader, who has actually led armies, can mightily improve his capacity for command by study and reflection.

Such was the opinion of Frederick, of Napoleon, and of many others. Then how can inexperienced officers know how battles were fought and won, or what practical training is required to meet the modern conditions of war, unless they study human nature, and listen attentively to what has been written by those who have weathered the storms of battle?

Regd. C. HART.

BELGAUM,
27th June, 1899.

CHAPTER I.

WHY THE AFRIDIS ROSE.

In the spring of 1897 the Indian Government, thanks to a bountiful harvest, was just beginning to breathe freely again after a long and desperate struggle with one of the most widespread and appalling famines recorded even in the annals of the East. No cloud had appeared on the political horizon to give any warning that there might be cause for uneasiness in the North-west, far less to show that before the end of the year the whole extent of that frontier would be one blaze of revolt, for the extinction of which a call must be made upon military resources which would need the putting forth of their utmost available strength to meet. The first indication of coming trouble was given in the Tochi Valley by what was described in the newspapers as the "Maizar Outrage." A treacherous and wholly unprovoked attack was made upon the escort of a political officer, resulting in three British officers being killed, three more wounded, and forty-eight other casualties. This occurred early in June. Before the end of July a couple of brigades had overrun the Tochi Valley, almost without resistance, and laid waste the villages of the offending tribesmen. This prompt chastisement, however, did little to deter risings in other parts of the frontier. The flame of rebellion spread rapidly from Waziristan on the left to Buner on the right, a stretch of over four hundred miles. The closing days of July witnessed the fierce and repeated attacks of the Swatis upon the garrisons of Chakdara and Malakand. Within a week of the relief of Chakdara, and when

the Malakand field force had barely begun their work, some four or five thousand Mohmands made a sudden raid into British territory near Shabkadr fort, only eighteen miles north of Peshawur, on August 7th. Such audacity called for instant reprisals, and thus the Government of India had already three separate expeditions on their hands, against the Waziris in the Tochi Valley, against the Swatis, and against the Mohmands, when signs of more serious trouble yet began to arise in a new direction.

The territory of the Afridis and Orakzais occupies that portion of the North-west frontier of India which is bounded roughly on the north by the Cabul river, where the Mohmands are their neighbours, and on the south by the Samana range. Of all the Pathan tribes on the frontier, the Afridis are the most numerous, powerful, and warlike. They inhabit an area of some 900 square miles, and are said to be able to muster about 30,000 fighting men. The Orakzais have not the same reputation for fighting as the Afridis, but are believed to be capable of putting into the field 25,000 men. It was therefore matter of grave moment when rumours arose that the contagion of rebellion had spread further to such formidable opponents as these.

Opinions are very much divided as to the reasons which led up to such universal risings among the tribes all along the frontier. Colonel Hutchinson, in his account of the campaign in Tirah, traces back the root of the mischief to the boundary agreement wrung from the Amir of Afghanistan, in 1893, in which that astute ruler reluctantly consented to the formation of the Afghan Boundary Commission. The object of this Commission was to determine a line dividing the tribes between the borders of India and Afghanistan into two spheres of influence, to be regulated respectively by himself and the Government of India. Some such arrangement, though of little advantage to the Amir, who scarcely concealed his

aversion to the whole scheme, had long been imperatively demanded by our interests, and by the difficulty of controlling the tribes beyond the border without any understanding as to the authority responsible for their good behaviour. Henceforth, all tribes on the nearer side of the line were to be under the general suzerainty of the Indian Government, who could now chastise them if necessary—and the necessity was not infrequent—without any fear of complications on the ground of their being subjects of his Highness of Afghanistan.

All idea of annexation was repudiated, and the tribes were assured there was no intention of interfering with their independence. The Boundary Commission began their labours at the southern end of the new line in Waziristan, and proceeded to draw it—with an escort of 3000 men and six guns just to assist. The Waziris grew uneasy, gathered their forces, and fell fiercely upon the camp at Wana. A strong force promptly despatched for their suppression, under Sir William Lockhart, swept through their country with fire and sword, raided their cattle and laid waste their villages, and the boundary was then completed through their territory. This was the first fruits and direct outcome of the Boundary Delimitation. Next year, 1895, came Chitral, and in the midsummer of 1897 began the series of outbreaks which were not ended till the close of the Tirah Expedition in the spring of 1898. Meanwhile the demarcation of the boundary line awaits completion yet.

The problem that a civilised power is called upon to solve, when brought into contact with savage neighbours, is one that is constantly presented to an Empire that perpetually extends its borders in one direction or another. The history of the British Empire has repeatedly shown that the result must be, that sooner or later such neighbours become unendurable, and undergo a gradual process of loss of independence and absorption into the control of

civilisation. In the case of tribes like the Pathans, fiercely jealous of any threat against their freedom, a freedom, by the way, which chiefly means liberty to carry on internecine feuds with one another and generally to make life a burden to themselves and their neighbours, this extension of the blessings of civilisation must of necessity be attended with much bloodshed and suffering before the process of absorption is completed. There is no help for it. Milder methods are of no avail, though we persist in making trial of them first. We had no desire to annex the territory on our side of the boundary, and were quite sincere in our professions of respect for their independence. But the tribesmen would have none of it. "And how," asks Colonel Hutchinson, "can one blame these people, simple, savage, and unsophisticated as they are? We may explain to them as much as we like, and protest as loudly as we can, but when they see the long line of boundary pillars going up; when they are told that henceforth all inside that line practically belongs to the British *Raj*, and that from this time their allegiance must be to us; and when, finally, they note our surveyors at work, mapping their country and measuring their fields, their reflection is 'Methinks you do protest too much,' and they are irresistibly driven to the conclusion that their country is annexed and their independence gone; a conclusion which is not easy to dispel when we follow on with military posts on their borders, or in their midst, as for instance those now established at Wana, and at points in the Gomal, Tochi, and Kurram valleys, and more especially on the Samana range."

It is probable that for many years to come the tribes on the North-west frontier will require a periodical thrashing to keep them in order. With a Pathan, and especially an Afridi, fighting is his occupation, his pastime, and his only joy. Unlike a Gurkha, who is never so happy as when *shikarring*

amongst his native mountains, the Afridi is no sportsman, for the simple and sufficient reason that his country is barren of game. Wherefore, as he shows his true savagedom by imposing upon his womenfolk all the household and agricultural labour, and as the inherited instinct for killing something is strong within him, he has an abundance of leisure time to devote to the congenial pursuit of *shikarring* his neighbours, for lack of nobler game. So that, largely out of their idleness, he must always be fighting somebody. Occasionally the propensity takes the form of a joint raid with a party of kinsfolk or acquaintance upon an adjoining tribe, or into British territory, to sack a police post, perhaps, or slaughter a few inoffensive villagers. Until the long-suffering forbearance of the Sirkar is overtaxed, and an expedition is sent against him. This results in a good deal of blood-letting, a few villages destroyed, a fine, perhaps, and the surrender of sundry weapons, and a lesson is learnt which induces him to keep the peace for a few years. Then a younger generation grows up who have never felt the scourge of a punitive force, and heedless of their elders' warnings, and spoiling for a fight, in their turn provoke the wrath of the government again. And so the game goes on. Probably there is only one way to put an end to it finally, and that is to follow the Duke of Wellington's famous prescription for the solution of the Irish question, and "shoot every d——d one of them." Such heroic measures unfortunately being contrary to the spirit of modern times, something might perhaps be done by enlisting greater numbers of them for the native army, so that their fighting qualities might be exercised in doing battle for, instead of against us. They take service willingly enough. The number of Sepoys recruited from amongst the trans-frontier tribes amounted, when the risings began, to about four thousand, of whom nearly half were Afridis. And that they can be true

to their salt as well as courageous, their loyalty and devotion on many a hard-fought field has fully testified. Moreover, immediately after the close of the Tirah Campaign the Afridis flocked to enlist in greater numbers than ever.

Seeing then the inborn love of a fight that pervades the savage breast of the Pathan, and given the presence of a Mullah or Mad Fakir, or other pestilent priest of Muhammadanism to preach *jehad* (the duty incumbent on all true Mussulmans of smiting the infidel), and thus impart to proceedings that touch of religious sentiment which fanaticism is ever ready to accept as an excuse for giving free rein to the lust for bloodshed and plunder—the elements of an outbreak on the border are not far to seek. But for so far-reaching a wave of rebellion as spread from end to end of the frontier in the latter half of 1897, some further explanation is required than the normal inflammability of the Pathan temperament. Everyone knows why we fought them. The reasons are set forth, plain for all to see, in the preamble of the order for the composition of the Tirah Field Force. "The general object of this expedition is to exact reparation for the unprovoked aggression of the Afridi and Orakzai tribes on the Peshawar and Kohat Borders, for their attacks on our frontier posts, and for the damage to life and property which has thus been inflicted on British subjects, and on those in the British service." But it is by no means equally obvious why they fought us.

Whilst the boldest enquirer would hesitate to attempt to probe to its depths the Oriental mind and assert that he had divined its workings with certainty, it may at least be allowed that a strong case may be made out for the theory that the real *cause* at the bottom of these risings, the bed-rock from which they started, was the policy which dictated the Boundary Agreement of 1893, with all its train of consequences. That this policy was ill-advised it would still be

premature to declare. But there can be little doubt that one of its first results was to give rise to a sense of distrust and uneasiness amongst the tribesmen, ever on the watch for real or imaginary menaces to their independence and keenly resentful of interference from outside, and to kindle a wrathful alarm that seethed and fermented in secret underground channels, until at last the smouldering flame broke loose in wild revolt and set the whole frontier ablaze.

If the cause of the outbreak is surrounded with uncertainty, still greater mystery envelopes its *occasion*. The reasons the tribes alleged themselves, such as their grievances over the enhancement of the salt tax, or the refusal of Government to surrender women who had taken refuge within British territory, were probably, if only by reason of the fact that they were put forward, nothing but mere pretexts. Moreover, they were not even offered until after the event. Your Pathan is no stickler for ceremony. He sees no object in going through the form of a solemn declaration of war. He raids you first and gives his reasons afterwards, if at all. Mention was made of the real complaint, namely, that encroachments had been made on tribal territory, but this perhaps was only incidental to the preposterous demand made—also after they had fully committed themselves—for the complete withdrawal of British forces from the Swat Valley and entire abandonment of the Samana Forts, a demand of which the purpose can have been nothing else but to add insult to the injury already inflicted.

It is a far cry from Athens to the Khyber, and the possible connection between the Græco-Turkish war and the Pathan revolt of 1897 is not one that lies upon the surface. Such an association of ideas may seem fanciful at first sight; nevertheless there are not wanting indications to show that the discomfiture of the infidel in Europe at the hands of the Commander of the Faithful, the acknowledged lord and

ruler of Islam, conveyed in a doubtless highly embellished and exaggerated form through some of the many mysterious channels by which rumour travels and spreads abroad in the inscrutable East, may not have furnished the spur that caused the long-simmering spirit of discontent on the Indian frontier to boil over, and fired the tribesmen, ever ready to espouse the cause of what they call their religion when it falls in with their innate love of bloodshed, to strive to emulate the achievements of their fellow Mussulmans in Greece and overthrow the yoke of the unbeliever. It is known at least that in the May of 1897, shortly before the first of the risings in that year, a Turkish visitor arrived at Cabul, where of course the trend of European politics is carefully noted and observed, and met with an honourable reception; also that this visit was immediately followed by a gathering of Mullahs to the Afghan capital. Nor was discussion of the Sultan's victories confined to the Amir's seat of Government. It was more than suspected that the native merchants and contractors of the bazaars in our frontier cantonments, notably at Peshawar, who reap a golden harvest out of the supplies required for any frontier expedition, sedulously sowed broadcast among the tribesmen stories of the British Government being involved in difficulties and hampered with disasters abroad, with the secret object of instigating revolt and of protracting resistance whilst the campaign was in progress. Further evidence on this point was produced by a reconnaissance from Maidan into the Waran Valley, conducted by General Kempster's brigade in the middle of November, when the Mullah Saiyid Akbar's house was visited and destroyed. In the house was found a quantity of the Mullah's correspondence. Amongst other curious and interesting documents was a letter written by the Hadda Mullah in July or August, affirming that the Turks had completely defeated the Greeks; that the English

had been turned out of Egypt and had lost the use of the Suez Canal; that the Mohmands too had defeated them; that their power in India was on the wane and now was the time to rise against them. Another letter, from members of the Afridi jirgah at Cabul, dated October 25th, stated that the British were at present in distressed circumstances. "Aden," it ran, "a seaport which was in possession of the British, has been taken from them by the Sultan. The Suez Canal, through which the British forces could easily reach India in twenty days, has also been taken possession of by the Sultan, and has now been granted on lease to Russia. The British forces now require six months to reach India. The friendly alliance between the British and the Germans has also been disturbed, on account of some disagreement about trade, which must result in the two nations rising in arms against each other. The Sultan, the Germans, the Russians and the French are all in arms against the British at all seaports, and fighting is going on in Egypt too against them. In short, the British are disheartened nowadays."

This was piling up the agony with a vengeance. Truly the British might well be disheartened by such a combination of calamities, and the time for their final overthrow was ripe indeed. It is difficult to believe that most of this can have been anything but caviare to the multitude of Afridis, but it displays an unexpected familiarity with foreign politics, on the part of their leaders at least, and altogether these were sufficiently surprising documents to come across in a remote village in the heart of unexplored Tirah. Moreover, underlying the thick crust of oriental embroidery, there was some faint substratum of truth, enough to pass muster anyhow with the average Pathan, who was not likely to draw nice distinctions of race between one European foreigner and another, and who would readily accept the defeat by the Muhammadan forces of the Sultan of any of the

infidel nations on the further side of the Gates of the East as the sign of a new era in which the followers of the Prophet should rise triumphant over the decaying powers of all the unbelievers.

The correspondence found in the house of the Mullah Saiyid Akbar was not without further significance from the light it shed upon the attitude of the Amir with regard to the frontier risings. Doubtless it was to the interest of the Mullahs, in inciting their followers to revolt against British rule, to represent the sympathies of Abdur Rahman as wholly enlisted on their side, and taken alone these letters cannot be said to furnish incontestable evidence of his complicity. But viewed in the light of other incidents of his behaviour they became at least worthy of notice. A letter from the Haddah Mullah contains the following passage, purporting to be the Amir's reply to his petition for aid. "You should wait for a few days in your former place, so that I may hold a consultation with the Khans, Maliks, Chiefs, and respectable men about *ghaza* and decide what steps should be taken. I will then either come myself or send to you my son for *jehad*, with our victorious troops and supplies, such as rations and food, and will let you know again. I will, with the greatest pleasure, make exertions in the way of *jehad*." Nobody supposes that one of these arch-priests of fanaticism would hesitate to further their ends by the most flagrant falsehoods, and even if the Amir had harboured any such treacherous designs, he was far too shrewd a man to jeopardise his throne by running such risk as would be incurred by committing them to writing, as the Mullah states he had done. Moreover this letter is dated the 5th September, and on the 17th August, the Amir had in open durbar made public disavowal of any sympathy with the risings against the British allies. Nevertheless, Saiyid Akbar at least was no fool, and the Hadda Mullah was not likely, in a letter to him, to put into

the Amir's mouth sentiments which would stand no chance of gaining credit with him. It was notorious that the Amir's Commander-in-chief, Ghulam Hyder Khan, cherished a violent hatred of British control, and had displayed an active sympathy with the Mohmands in their rising, in which a considerable number of the Amir's subjects took part. Rumour had also connected Abdur Rahman's name, more or less intimately, with the previous rising in the Swat Valley, and the whole question of the boundary delimitation was known to be extremely distasteful to a ruler fully alive, as he was, to the advantage of preserving in independence a buffer state between himself and his powerful British neighbours. For some years past he had been pursuing a persistent policy of striving to gain additional security for his rule by posing as the "Fidei Defensor" of Muhammadanism, in North-west India, and beyond. He assumed the title of the "Light of Union and Faith," by which he is found described in the Mullah's letters, and referred to himself in correspondence as the "King of Islam." He had recently caused to be published, under his official sanction, a book expounding afresh the tenets of the Muhammadan gospels, in which particular stress was laid upon the duty of *jehad*. In addition to all this, there was the significant fact of the honourable reception accorded to the Turkish visitor to his capital, and subsequent summoning thither of a conference of Mullahs.

Small wonder then that the tribesmen should look to him for encouragement in their revolt against an infidel power, and that the universal voice of public opinion in India should fasten upon him a large measure of responsibility for the troubles on the frontier. That this belief was not devoid of foundation is evidenced by the fact that the Government of India deemed it advisable to forward an emphatic protest to Cabul, requiring something more from the Amir than a mere formal disclaimer of responsibility.

The result was eminently satisfactory, and at once allayed any anxiety that had been felt as to the course His Highness intended to pursue. If he had ever nourished schemes hostile to the Government, he evidently saw reason now to discard them. He read out the Viceroy's letter in public durbar, as well as his reply. He made solemn declaration of his unbroken loyalty to the British alliance, and issued stringent orders forbidding any of his subjects to engage in hostilities on the border. This attitude he continued to maintain henceforth with unswerving fidelity.

Whether, however, the tribesmen believed in the sincerity of these professions, or whether they were so convinced at heart of his secret sympathy with their own cause that they regarded them merely as dictated by the passing policy of the moment, is at least open to doubt. The Afridis, at any rate, must have continued to cherish hopes of his assistance. A month later they sent a deputation to Cabul, with petitions tendering their allegiance to the King of Islam, and requesting his help in their coming struggle with the government. This was towards the end of September, and by now they had crossed the Rubicon, and committed themselves beyond recall by their attacks on the Khyber forts on the 23rd August. Had Abdur Rahman been steeped to the lips in treason their action could hardly have failed, by such premature forcing of his hand, to have alienated the sympathies of the sovereign whom they now professed their readiness to obey. The closing of the Khyber alone, with the consequent stoppage of the large caravan trade, which entailed the loss of the considerable revenue arising from tolls levied from passing merchants, besides a serious interruption to the internal traffic of his kingdom, had aroused in the Amir the utmost annoyance and indignation. The last hopes of the Afridis for his countenance were now to be rudely dispelled. He stopped their deputa-

tion at Jellalabad before they got within eighty miles of Cabul. He refused absolutely to have anything to do with their grievances, and rebuked them roundly for their folly, declaring that he had formed an agreement with his friends the English, and had no intention of breaking it. "What you have done," he wrote, "with your own hands you must now carry on your own necks. I have nothing to do with you. You are the best judges of your affairs. Now that you have got into trouble you want me to help you. You have allowed the time when matters might have been ameliorated to slip by. Now I cannot say or do anything." To further emphasise his refusal and avoid any possible misunderstanding, the Amir caused the text of the Afridi petition, and of his reply, to be publicly posted up in Cabul for all to read, and also issued proclamations bearing on the subject in Eastern Afghanistan. No stronger proof of his honourable intentions could have been offered, and from this time forward the loyalty of His Highness was beyond suspicion, as his conduct was beyond reproach.

The acts of aggression on the part of the tribesmen, which formed the immediate cause of the Tirah expedition, were the attacks of the Afridis on the Khyber forts and the Orakzai raids on the posts of the Samana. These movements were to have been simultaneous. The representatives of the two tribes had made a compact to work together in assaulting each that part of British territory which lay nearest their own border. The Orakzais were to attack us on the Kohat side, whilst the Afridis engaged our attention in the Khyber. These designs were fortunately frustrated by the mutual distrust and utter want of combination which is characteristic of Pathan tribes. The Orakzais waited to see how their allies fared first, and postponed the gathering of their own forces until the Afridis had completed their part of the undertaking and entirely withdrawn from the

Khyber. Which was considerate of them. For their delay to act had given time for additional troops to be brought up to reinforce the Kohat-Kurram line, and enabled the military authorities to devote to their suppression an attention undivided by any claims of the Afridis. It is true that Saragheri fell, that ill-designed, hopelessly situated, mis-begotten caricature of a fort; and every Englishman thrilled at the tale of the one-and-twenty doomed heroes that for seven and a-half deadly hours held it against swarming thousands, splendidly upholding the traditions of their gallant race and adding undying honour to the name of the 36th Sikhs. But these same hordes of tribesmen, drunk with success and blood, flung themselves in vain for three long days on Gulistan. For did not Gulistan contain 165 of the same lion-hearted Sikhs who had sold their lives so dear at Saragheri? These were led too by British officers, a Major, whose very soul must have sickened at the thought of a delicate wife and four children in the fort beset by a howling sea of savages; and a subaltern boy, and a brave doctor and an Englishwoman no less brave to tend the wounded. So the fight of the 165 within and the 10,000 without, begun on the morning of the 12th September, surged without ceasing till noon of the 15th, when the welcome sight of the skirmishers of General Yeatman-Biggs' relieving column appeared on the skyline from Fort Lockhart. Before nightfall the Samana was swept clean of the enemy, of living enemy at least, and the Forts have not been troubled since. Two guns and a native regiment were left in Gulistan, and the rest of the relieving force returned to bivouac at Fort Lockhart. They had left Hangu at midnight, marched twenty-four miles without food, and fought three actions during the day.

In such wise did the heroism of the 36th Sikhs, and the lightning energy of General Yeatman-Biggs, confound the knavish tricks of the Orakzais and hurl

them baffled down from the Samana. It was high time a decisive blow was struck. Three weeks before British prestige had suffered serious damage in the Khyber, thanks to the astounding policy of inactivity pursued by the authorities at Peshawar. For many a long century the Khyber Pass has been famed in history as the great—almost the only—entrance into India from the north. It is the route by which countless successions of hungry invaders have swooped down upon the rich and fertile plains of Bengal, to carve out kingdoms for themselves. In modern times it is of the last importance as the highroad of commerce between India and Central Asia. The wild tracts of barren mountains through which it winds are held by sundry sections of the Afridi tribes, who for generations had regarded it as their right to levy blackmail on the fat caravans passing through. After the last Afghan War the Government of India decided that this was a state of things no longer to be borne, on the very borders of British territory, and that they must take into their own hands the control of the Khyber with its vast and valuable traffic. Accordingly in 1881, with the consent of the Amir, whose interests equally demanded the maintenance of peace and order in the Pass, a compact was entered upon with the Afridis of the Khyber to end this scandal once and for all. In consideration of an annual subsidy of 67,000 rupees, they agreed to forego their claims of plunder and to accept the responsibility for safeguarding the road. To this end an irregular corps of Khyber Rifles was raised, chiefly from among the Pass Afridis, to garrison forts which were built at intervals along the Pass, and placed under the command of an Afghan native officer, Major Aslam Khan. As the strength of the Khyber Rifles amounted to about 1000 men, who were entirely equipped and paid by Government, a considerable additional sum of rupees was thus poured into the insatiable pockets of the tribe.

This system of setting a thief to catch a thief answered admirably. For sixteen years the Khyber Afridis fulfilled their share of the bargain with unbroken fidelity. True, their interests, as represented by the yearly grant of many thousand rupees, were all wrapped up in keeping the peace, but even that consideration failed at the last. Possibly so prolonged a period of inaction palled upon the warlike instincts of the younger generation. Or perhaps the contagion of their neighbours' revolt proved a temptation too strong to be withstood. Be that as it may, the Afridis broke off at last their allegiance of sixteen years, and cast in their lot with the rest of the frontier tribes. Even so the Khyber Rifles for the most part remained true to their salt, and long maintained a desperate and unequal struggle against overwhelming numbers of their own kith and kin.

Eighteen months previous to this outbreak, Captain Barton, of the Guides Cavalry, Assistant Political Officer at Landi Kotal, had taken over the command of the Khyber Rifles from Major Aslam Khan. His appointment was in every respect an admirable choice, for no officer possessed a more intimate acquaintance with the character and language of the Pathan. On hearing of the Mohmand rising, Captain Barton at once foresaw its probable effect upon the Afridis. He strengthened the garrisons of the more advanced Khyber forts, laid in supplies of water and provisions sufficient to last fifteen days, and brought up fifty thousand rounds of ammunition to the fortified *serai* at Landi Kotal. When further news arrived that a *lashkar* of ten thousand Afridis had actually started for an assault on the Khyber, he promptly applied to the Commissioner at Peshawar for four companies of regular troops and a couple of guns, which he considered would have been ample for the defence of the place against any number of tribesmen. In reply he received a peremptory order to return at once to

Jamrud, the fort at the mouth of the Khyber, seven miles from Peshawar. Accordingly he set out down the pass, leaving all his property behind him, in the confident belief that no attack would be made on the fort at Landi Kotal for at least three days, and that he would be sent back directly he had explained the position to the Commissioner. His feelings on learning that the Khyber Rifles were to be left to their fate can be better imagined than described. A fortnight before, when the Mohmands rose, though their intentions were the common talk of the bazaars, no inkling of danger in that quarter had reached official ears, and the fall of Shabkadr fort, only eighteen miles distance from cantonments, fell upon the Peshawar authorities like a bolt from the blue. No such ignorance, however culpable, of the Afridi designs could be pleaded in excuse of their amazing inaction now. It may be that considerations for Captain Barton's personal safety weighed with the Commissioner's refusal to allow his return. But Landi Kotal was within a day's march of Peshawar, and in or about Peshawar the Brigadier commanding had at his disposal a force of eleven thousand troops, including thirty-six guns and eighteen squadrons of cavalry.

Three days passed, as Captain Barton had foretold, before the storm broke, yet not a finger was raised to lend assistance to the abandoned Khyber Rifles; not one effort made even to recover the mass of ammunition stored at Landi Kotal.

It is not a pleasant story to dwell upon. On August 23rd the Afridis came, saw with unbounded surprise the forts left helpless, and conquered most of them with consummate ease. Yet not all. Ali Musjid fell and Fort Maude, with little resistance, the Rifles, who defended them, making good their escape to Jamrud, not, however, before they had accounted for twelve of the enemy at the former, and thirty-four at the latter post. But Landi Kotal proved a harder nut

to crack. Captain Barton's confidence in his power to hold it, with the aid of a couple of guns and a few regulars, was fully justified by the protracted resistance made without them. That it fell in the end is less surprising than that it should have held out so long. The attack began at noon on the 24th, and all that day and the following night the five native officers and three hundred and seventy men of the Khyber Rifles held the hordes of their countrymen without at bay. They lost ten men only, including a native officer killed and another wounded, whilst some two hundred of the enemy bit the dust. It is at least satisfactory that the Khyber Rifles suffered no further losses, for when next morning treachery within opened the gates, the bulk of them gave convincing proof of their loyalty by forcing a way with their rifles back to Jamrud.

The Afridis now dispersed to their homes, leaving behind the smoking ruins of the captured posts to bear eloquent witness to their defiance of British rule. They had stormed three of our forts, sacked and burnt them, taken several rifles, and—most precious prize of all—fifty thousand rounds of ammunition, not to mention Captain Barton's property and other loot. They had good reason to be content with their achievements so far. But the cup of their iniquity was full, and the day of inevitable reckoning awaited them. Two months later Sir William Lockhart, with twenty thousand men, was thundering at the door of their inviolate Tirah, from which it had been their proud boast that no stranger's hand had ever dared nor ever would dare to lift the curtain; and before long, wasted lands and ruined homesteads gave them bitter cause to rue the day they had flung their challenge at the invincible might of British power.

AFGHANISTAN
Safed Koh Range
Surghar Range
Kajuri Plain
Peshawar
Bannu
KOHAT
ROUGH SKETCH
TO ILLUSTRATE THE OPERATIONS OF THE
TIRAH EXPEDITIONARY FORCE.

CHAPTER II.

"FROM BAREILLY TO SHINAWARI."

EARLY in September the Government of India announced their determination to institute punitive operations on an extensive scale against both the Afridis and the Orakzai. The supreme control of the campaign was entrusted to Lieutenant-General Sir William Lockhart, Commanding the Forces in the Punjab and Commander-in-Chief-Elect of the Army in India. Sir William Lockhart was then on leave at home, but he left Brindisi on the 3rd September at almost a day's notice, accompanied by Major-General Lord Methuen, who desired to have an opportunity of seeing how a big frontier expedition is carried out, and who was subsequently attached to the Head-Quarter Staff in the capacity of Press Censor.

The order issued detailing the composition of the Tirah Field Force opened with a preamble to the following effect:—"The general object of this expedition is to exact reparation for the unprovoked aggression of the Afridi and Orakzai tribes on the Peshawar and Kohat borders, for their attacks on our frontier posts, and for the damage to life and property which has thus been inflicted on British subjects and on those in the British service. It is believed that this object can best be attained by the invasion of Tirah, the summer home of the Afridis and Orakzais, which has never before been entered by a British force."

The Force comprised the Main Column, under Sir William Lockhart's personal command, charged with the task of crossing the Samana for the actual invasion of Tirah; the Line of Communication troops under

command of Lieutenant-General Sir A. Power Palmer, in which were included four regiments of native infantry, the 3rd Bengal Cavalry, the magnificent transport trains of the Jeypore and Gwalior Imperial Service Transport Corps, six Field Hospitals and various Departmental details; two subsidiary Columns, one under Brigadier-General Hammond intended to move from Peshawar into the Bara Valley, and the other, a smaller force under Colonel Hill, to stand ready for action in the Kurram Valley; and lastly, a Reserve Brigade of four infantry battalions and a cavalry regiment at Rawal Pindi.

The Main Column was composed of two Divisions, the first commanded by Major-General Symons, second by Major-General Yeatman-Biggs. Each Division contained two Infantry Brigades, three mountain Batteries, two squadrons of Native Cavalry (the 18th Bengal Lancers), a Native Pioneer regiment, a regiment of Imperial Service Infantry, sundry companies of Sappers and Miners, and two Field Hospitals. The four Infantry Brigades, numbered 1 to 4, the 1st and 2nd belonging to the 1st Division, the 3rd and 4th to the 2nd, comprised each two British and two Native battalions, with a British and Native Field Hospital. The following were the regiments composing the four brigades and their several commanders:

First Brigade, Brigadier-General Hart.

2nd Battalion Derbyshire Regiment.
1st Battalion Devonshire Regiment.
2nd Battalion 1st Gurkha (Rifle) Regiment.
30th (Punjab) Regiment of Bengal Infantry.

Second Brigade, Brigadier-General Gaselee.

2nd Battalion P. W. O. Yorkshire Regiment.
1st Battalion Royal West Surrey Regiment.
2nd Battalion 4th Gurkha (Rifle) Regiment.
3rd Regiment of Sikh Infantry, Punjab Frontier Force.

Third Brigade, Brigadier-General Kempster.

1st Battalion Gordon Highlanders.
1st Battalion Dorsetshire Regiment.
1st Battalion 2nd Gurkha (Rifle) Regiment.
15th (Ludhiana Sikh) Regiment of Bengal Infantry.

Fourth Brigade, Brigadier-General Westmacott.

2nd Battalion King's Own Scottish Borderers.
1st Battalion Northamptonshire Regiment.
1st Battalion 3rd Gurkha (Rifle) Regiment.
36th (Sikh) Regiment of Bengal Infantry.

The Main Column therefore comprised eight regiments of British and twelve of Native Infantry, with six Mountain Batteries, one regiment of Native Cavalry and five companies of Sappers. The strength of the 1st Division, all ranks, was about 9460; of the 2nd Division, 9268; whilst the number of non-combatant followers very nearly equalled that of the fighting men, thus doubling the mouths to be fed. Moreover, the animals with the column, by the time it reached the first camp after Shinawari at Khorappa, including horses, mules, camels and other pack animals, reached the prodigious total of over 25,000. The strength of the whole Expeditionary Force, Reserve Brigade included, was approximately as follows:—British Officers, 1010; Native Officers, 491; British Troops, 10,182; Native Troops, 22,123; Hospital Assistants, 197—making a grand total of 34,003. And this, be it remembered, does not include the vast army of followers.

During the first days of September the prospects of the Derbyshire Regiment being fortunate enough to be sent to take part in the campaign that was now inevitable seemed dismally small. The disposal and strength of garrisons in India are determined not so much, as in home stations, by questions of existing barrack accommodation, and suitable training ground in the neighbourhood, as by political considerations. Troops there are either massed in large stations guarding the frontier, or disposed in cantonments

adjoining native cities.' However carefully the fact may be disguised, India is ultimately governed by the sword, and a large number of the garrisons cannot safely be removed without endangering the public peace. The cantonment at Bareilly forms essentially one of those obligatory garrisons. The vicinity of the somewhat turbulent native State of Rampur renders Bareilly City a source of constant anxiety to the Civil Power, and in addition, during the last few weeks previous to the present time, there had been various symptoms of unrest among the Mussulmans in many parts of India, particularly towards the north. Seditious pamphlets were found being circulated by mischief-makers amongst sepoys of Mussulman regiments, and there was a distinct note of uneasiness prevailing in the utterances of the best-informed Indian newspapers. Although there was no special cause to doubt the loyalty of any particular Muhammadan regiment, the opinion was more than once expressed, by men in the best position for judging, that the Tirah Campaign fell in at a most opportune moment for diverting the attention of the Mussulman sepoys into more wholesome channels. Shortly before the outbreak of the war a Mussulman regiment stationed at Bareilly had been suddenly relieved by a Bombay regiment brought up from the South for the purpose. It was therefore quite certain that Bareilly could not be denuded of British troops, and as we were the only British infantry in the garrison, we were sorely afraid that it would be our lot to be left behind there, playing *chowkidar* to Bareilly City, of which the population is almost purely Muhammadan. Moreover, B Company, which with E had spent the hot weather at the Standing Camp in the hills at Ranikhet, had been left up there on detachment to form the winter garrison, in the place of the detachment of the 19th P.W.O. Yorkshire Regiment, who in the ordinary course would have performed that duty, but who had already been

ordered to the front. Altogether our hopes of seeing active service were at a low ebb.

Consequently it came as a most joyful and agreeable surprise, when, early on the morning of the 19th September, the Commanding Officer received orders for the mobilisation of the Battalion, which was detailed to form with the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry, the 2nd Hyderabad Infantry, and a Battalion of Imperial Service Troops, the Reserve Brigade of the Tirah Field Force. We were to proceed at once to join the Brigade at Rawal Pindi, our place at Bareilly being taken by a wing of the Cameronians, and orders were telegraphed to the detachment at Ranikhet to rejoin headquarters of the Battalion without delay.

The excitement was unprecedented; the telegraph office of Bareilly was understood to be worked at an extraordinarily high pressure, while young officers wired farewells and dispatched orders for forgotten articles of field kit. The Oudh and Rohilkand Railway changed their train arrangements not less than once in every three quarters of an hour, but eventually the Battalion was enabled to leave in two trains on the evening of Wednesday, the 22nd September. The first train, with E, F, G, and H Companies and the following officers, viz.: Major Taylor, Captains Bowman and Bosanquet, Lieutenants Mortimore, McKinnon, Jones, and Hallowes left about five p.m., and were inspected on the platform, prior to departure, by Lieutenant-General Sir Baker Russell, who had arrived that afternoon from Naini Tal.

The second party, consisting of Headquarters, with A, C, and D Companies and the following officers, viz.: Lieutenant-Colonel Dowse, Major Wylly, Captain Smith, Lieutenants Keller and Attfield, with Quarter-Master Riddell and Surgeon Captain Barnet, was despatched from Bareilly at ten p.m. Total strength of Battalion, thirteen Officers and six hundred and twenty-five Sergeants, rank and file.

Our first halt was at Umballa, where we rested

during the heat of the day in the rest barracks at the cantonment station, and saw a good deal of Major Gosset, who appeared to combine in one official the positions of A.A.G., D.A.A.G., S.S.O., Rest Camp Sergeant, and several others less important, but no doubt equally onerous and underpaid. We went on again that night, reaching Mian Mir about eight a.m. on the 24th; here no arrangements worth mentioning had been made for our reception, the officiating S.S.O. (who put in an appearance for a few precious moments), remarking in injured tones that he had "absolutely no idea until about ten minutes ago that we were even coming." Since those early days we learnt to greet this remark as quite an old friend. We spent a very hot, dusty day at Mian Mir, where we were imprisoned in a singularly greasy barrack room, and got off again that night, arriving at Rawal Pindi at about nine a.m. Here it was already perceptibly cooler than down in the North-West Provinces.

We were met at the station by Captain Menzies of the South Lancashire Regiment, who was attached to the Battalion for duty and took over temporary charge of letter A Company. We marched to West Ridge and were put up in the very comfortable huts occupied during the cold weather by the troops from the Murree Hills. The next day, the 26th, was a Sunday, and we did nothing very startling, but those who had not been fortunate enough to complete their kit prior to leaving Bareilly were able to do so here. One officer who had started with nothing but what he carried on his person, was lucky enough to purchase a weird revolver at Messrs. Jamasjee & Co., a pair of opera-glasses in the Sudder Bazaar, and a greatcoat of quaint design from the coffee shop wallah! On Monday the 27th, we went for a short walk, followed, at a decent interval, by the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry, who kindly told us that *they* were certain to go on, and that the Derbys had only been sent to

Pindi for fatigue duty! The next day we had intended doing another short route march, but before we started the D.A.A.G. of the Reserve Brigade had dashed up at breakneck speed in a tikka-gharry, flourishing a telegram ordering us to proceed at once to Kohat to relieve the Royal Irish, who were returning to Pindi for garrison duty. As this placed us in the 1st Brigade of the 2nd Division we were much elated, and when we marched out that evening some of the Derbys were overheard begging the men of the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry, in simple but kindly terms, to be of good cheer, as we were "only a fatigue party and were not really going away!"

At Pindi we were joined by Captain and Adjutant Green, who had remained at Bareilly to hand over the Depot, and by Lieutenants Pennell and Way from Pachmarhi.

We left in one very long train with a particularly feeble engine at eight that evening for Kushalgarh, and passed rather a disturbed night, as the engine driver seemed to have some little difficulty in keeping on the rails. We reached Kushalgarh, the railway terminus, soon after seven the following morning, and here quitted the train, little expecting that it would be over six months before we should see one again.

Kushalgarh presented a spectacle calculated to produce a forcible impression of the enormous and incessant labour involved in the preparations for a big frontier war. It would probably have astonished a continental General, accustomed to the idea of moving armies chiefly by rail. From here on to the base of the expedition at Kohat, and of course onwards, all advance of troops, all conveyance of stores must necessarily be conducted by road. On each side of the railway, for about two miles before the station was reached, the ground was closely covered with an enormous accumulation of every conceivable description of stores waiting to be forwarded to Kohat. Vast pyramids of grain bags, compressed *bhusa*,

biscuit boxes, preserved meat cases, groceries and other provisions for man and beast; huge piles of stacked tents, clothing, ammunition, ordnance stores and various equipment; acres of government transport carts, hired country carts, bullocks, camels and mules with their hosts of attendants, met the eye in every direction.

The railway ended close above the eastern bank of the Indus, and a steep road, deep in dust, zigzagged down the bank to the double bridge of boats that crossed it a hundred feet or more below the level of the adjacent country. One bridge was reserved for the forward and the other for the returning stream of constant traffic. The upper level on the further side of the river was reached by a long, straight incline, also deep in dust and much worn by the incessant passage of transport, so that half a dozen elephants had been brought to assist the oxen in drawing up the heavily laden, cumbrous country carts. The Rest Camp, a most arid spot, was situated on the top of the further bank, and close by it was a small dilapidated Dak Bungalow, in which a distracted Khansama made futile efforts to cope with the unwonted strain of the present busy times upon his wholly inadequate resources. The only drinking water procurable at the Rest Camp was carried up from the river, and was of the colour and consistency of skimmed milk. Occasionally a dead camel or other foreign substance might be seen floating down the stream, but apparently no disagreeable flavour was thereby imparted to the water, and the medicos were universally of opinion that for drinking purposes it was excellent.

We left the railway station at once, and crossed the Indus by the bridge of boats to the Rest Camp, whilst the morning was still cool. The heat by day was still considerable, and troops were marching as far as Kohat by night. The day, therefore, had to be spent at Kushalgarh, and a remarkably dreary day it

was. The men were in very dusty tents, whilst the officers sought the shelter and hospitality of the Dak Bungalow, and occupied the only two rooms, each about ten feet square, which it contained. In moving about in these the extraordinary number and length of the legs of the subaltern officers caused some of us to use language which in our calmer moments we regret!

We had a seventeen-mile march before us to Gumbat, the halting place a little more than half-way to Kohat, so we started at 7.45 p.m. and arrived there at 2.30. It was not an enjoyable march. For the first thirteen miles the road is very much up and down, running between bare rocky hills and through an absolutely desert country. After that it descends into an open valley of very considerable width, with increasing signs of fertility in the direction of Kohat; but until Gumbat is reached there is not a drop of water to be got all the way, and scarcely a scrap of vegetation. Considering the incessant stream of transport that flowed night and day to and fro between Kushalgarh and Kohat, the road was in very fair order, and the dust was not so awful as might have been expected. It was only when the column met or overtook a transport train or long string of camels, which happened every half-mile almost, or when the road passed through a gully with high banks on each side blocking out the air, that the dust and heat became a trifle stifling. Occasionally too, where some wretched bullock or camel or other beast of burden had fallen exhausted to die by the roadside, and the gorged vultures had not completed their ghastly work upon the carcases, the scents that greeted us were rather terrific.

Nobody was sorry to reach the Rest Camp at Gumbat and turn in to sleep in the small hours of that morning of the 30th September. It was the first long march of the campaign, and the Battalion was not yet in the best of training for marching.

The next day most of us spent in comparing the pulpy condition of our feet, and in endeavouring, but with indifferent success, to wash ourselves. Several lines of E.P. tents had been pitched, as at Kushalgarh and Kohat, to form a permanent Rest Camp for passing troops to occupy, and the Camp at Gumbat rejoiced in the possession of two good wells close at hand. Half a mile off there was a very fair Dak Bungalow, or rather a sort of spacious fortified Serai, containing a few fairly-furnished rooms with punkahs, which some of the officers made use of to rest in during the day.

The march that night to Kohat, about fifteen miles, was completed by midnight. From Gumbat the road ran in a line for some miles straight for Kohat over a level plain, covered with low scrub interspersed with patches of cultivation, a great relief after the howling wilderness through which we had marched the previous night. Then it descended by gentle gradients into the cantonment of Kohat, a green oasis of flowing streams, cultivated fields and fine timber trees in the midst of a barren and thirsty land. On arriving there we found nobody stirring to show us where to go, but we took possession of the Rest Camp, and all slept soundly until about 7.30 the next morning, when a staff officer turned up and spoke a few kindly words.

It is easy to imagine many a worse station to be quartered in than Kohat. The heat for three or four weeks in the year is no doubt extreme, and the cantonment is somewhat remote from civilisation, though a few hours' drive in a mail tonga brings you to the rail at Kushalgarh. But the climate, on the whole, is most agreeable, the nights are always cool, the place is pretty, with its picturesque bungalows and beautiful gardens, and the native infantry regiments and the batteries on garrison duty there enjoy the abiding satisfaction of being very much on the spot when there is a chance of service on the

frontier. Just now the ceaseless flow of troops passing through on their way to the front; the push, the hurry, the scramble of numberless stray officers hastening to overtake their regiments or take up staff appointments; the endless stream of carts, camels mules, ponies and bullocks pouring in to discharge loads of supplies, clothing, and war material on the stony plains round the cantonment; the immense difficulty of obtaining from the overworked local staff the minimum of attention to the numerous wants of troops requiring to be satisfied before any further progress could be made, all combined to make Kohat a spot to be escaped from with the least possible delay.

A certain amount of delay, however, was inevitable. All our ammunition had to be exchanged, the winter scale of Field Service clothing to be drawn, and the swords and bayonets of the whole battalion to be sharpened. Also the weight of kits had to be finally reduced to 30lbs., and the surplus baggage stored. Very fortunate were those officers who had already bestowed their surplus baggage elsewhere, for very little of the private property stored in the *godown* of Mr. Mohamed Shafi at Kohat, ever reached its owners hands again, thanks to the light-fingered gentry who infest the northern frontier. The Battalion left Bareilly with full complement of ordinary ball ammunition, the whole of which had to be returned into the Ordnance Depôt at Kohat, and "Dum Dum Special" drawn in place of it. We took the field with 339 rounds per man, for a strength of 749 rifles. Of these the men themselves carried 100 rounds apiece in their pouches. 94 rounds per man were carried on thirty-two pack mules, the 1st Regimental Reserve; and the remaining 145 rounds, forming the 2nd Regimental Reserve, were carried first on twenty camels, and afterwards on fifty mules. The ordinary system, laid down in the drill book, for the supply of ammunition to troops in the

field, is like most other things in that work, wholly impossible to carry out in such a country as Tirah. With regard to clothing, we started from Bareilly with only ordinary kit reduced to a minimum, having then received orders, it will be remembered, to proceed no further than the Reserve Brigade at Rawal Pindi. On leaving Pindi the weight of kits was further reduced, and after Kohat the final scale was fixed at 30lbs. As the winter scale of Field Service clothing was issued at the last place, the bulk of what was brought up from Bareilly was left there. At Shinawari again the tents and most of the camp equipment were left behind, and thus the course of our progress was marked by a line of stores containing successive relays of kit shed at various posts. The winter clothing issued to each man at Kohat comprised two blankets, one waterproof sheet, an extra pair of putties, a pair of woollen mitts, a cardigan jacket, a weird-looking sort of knitted nightcap, intended to be pulled right down over the head, with a slit left in it for the eyes or mouth, called a Balaclava cap, and a Gathri jacket. (This is sometimes spelt Guthrie, as it is pronounced, probably from an idea that an individual of that name designed the garment in question, but the Hindustani word, *Gathri*, meaning a bundle, is more likely to be the derivation of the term.) The coat is made of stout khaki serge, lined with thick grey flannel, and is cut short, like a pea-jacket, so that whilst beautifully warm it is comfortable to march in. It can be worn with the straps supporting the pouches, &c., inside or outside it. Winter clothing on the same scale was drawn for all the native followers, *Bhistis*, sweepers, cooks, &c., with the addition of a haversack, water bottle, and a pair of shoes.

The Regimental Transport consisted of 105 pack mules, carrying the "obligatory" stores, and the equivalent of 364 more, made up of mules, camels, donkeys, or any other four-footed beast, to carry

tents (when we had any), kits, and commissariat supplies. The 100 obligatory mules, with five per cent. spare, always followed the Battalion immediately, and marched in the order prescribed by the relative importance of their loads. Thus, the mules carrying the reserve of ammunition came first, next the water mules, then those responsible for signalling equipment, entrenching tools, field stretchers, and last of all cooking utensils and great coats. The great coats were taken throughout the campaign, in addition to the Gathri coats, which the men either marched in or carried rolled in straps on their backs. That curse of the soldier and company officer, the valise, was left behind. It is now abolished altogether for Indian use, and it is devoutly to be hoped the home authorities in this matter will follow the excellent example of the Indian Government.

There was thus a good deal to be done at Kohat, and the Battalion halted there the whole of the 1st and 2nd October. At the present time there were no British troops beyond Kohat except the 18th Royal Irish, who were under orders to return, and we were ordered to march on to the advanced depôt being formed at Shinawari, which had been appointed as the rendezvous where the two Divisions of the Main Column of the Tirah Field Force were to concentrate for the invasion of Tirah. The distance was forty-eight miles, the intervening stages being Kuz-Usterzai, fourteen miles; Hangu thirteen miles; Kai fifteen miles; and six miles more into Shinawari. For the greater part of the way the road still ran through British territory, but close along the border skirting the country of the revolted Orakzai, who might—and in fact occasionally did—make raids down from the mountainous regions on the north of the road upon the troops, or at least upon the camps and convoys of the force advancing along it for their chastisement. All marches therefore beyond Kohat had to be conducted as in the enemy's country and during daylight

and advantage could no longer be taken of the cool hours of the night.

The Regiment marched out of Kohat on the morning of Sunday, October 3rd. A very early start had been intended, but unfortunately some of the transport animals failed to arrive at our camp at the right time. The excellent wheeled transport which we had been blessed with between Kushalgarh and Kohat was now exchanged for pack transport, and the men not being yet thoroughly accustomed to arranging loads for pack animals, a great deal of time was taken up in making a start. Consequently the sun was high before the rear-guard got away, and the fourteen miles to Usterzai were not finished till about 2.30 in the afternoon. It was very hot indeed for the last few miles, and one or two men were very much exhausted, Private Lumsden of D Company dying of heat apoplexy on reaching camp. The road was in fairly good condition considering the constant stream of carts, camels, and other transport animals along it, but there was seldom a hundred consecutive yards without some transport cart or beast upon it, and the dust can better be imagined than described. For the first few miles out of Kohat the road was quite level and nearly straight; it then rose abruptly, affording a fine bird's-eye view of the long stretch behind, with an apparently never-ending cloud of dust arising from the immense line of transport slowly and painfully struggling along. Then it climbed down across the face of a steep hill-side, that dropped sheer into the bed of the brawling, milky-hued Kohat river below on the left, and ran through a series of high barren cliffs, on the top of which could be seen perched at intervals groups or single sentries of some native infantry regiment employed on picquet duty watching the road. Now and again we passed through fertile, well-timbered valleys, where harvesting was just beginning, and where beautiful clear streams bordered the fields, a pleasant contrast to the

wilderness of sand and rock on the further side of Kohat. The villagers on the wayside appeared friendly enough, as they came out to stare at the troops marching by, but probably half the men who salaamed to us so respectfully were murderous rascals of the deepest dye.

The camping ground at Usterzai—there were no longer standing camps all ready for occupation—was on a level piece of cultivation with a lovely transparent stream flowing close alongside it, in which some of us enjoyed a delicious and refreshing bathe. Two most hospitable Officers and a couple of hundred men of the 2nd Punjab Infantry were encamped here forming a permanent garrison, chiefly to provide road picquets; and the presence of sentries on the surrounding hills and entrenchments on the north side of their camp gave indications of the proximity of a possible enemy. Nor was anyone allowed to sleep outside the limits of the camp, and Officers were forbidden to travel to and from Kohat without escort. A raid upon the camp made by a party of tribesmen from the adjoining hills, probably aided by some of the friendly villagers, a night or two after we left it, proved that these precautions were fully justified.

A thirteen-mile tramp next morning along an almost level but dull and uninteresting road, more dusty than ever from being unmetalled in many parts, brought us to the next halting-place, about a mile beyond Hangu, a place which boasts a sort of fortified Serai, a Dak Bungalow with a pretty garden, and a resident magistrate, with a court-house wherein to mete and dole, like Ulysses among the barren crags of Ithaca,

> "Laws unto a savage race,
> That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and know not me."

The camping-ground was on a plain deep in dust, where constant winds and frequent dust storms made life in tents a burden, and gave us little cause to envy

the lot of the luckless troops condemned to a lengthy sojourn there in order to furnish picquets and escorts on that section of the line of communication. However, on arrival here we were welcomed with the glad news that now we were in the 1st Brigade of the 1st Division, having with us the Devons, the 30th Punjab Infantry, and the 2nd Battalion 1st Gurkhas, the last our old friends of Sikkim days.

Leaving Hangu about five a.m. the following day we continued our march for some eleven miles along the tonga road between Kohat and Bannu, passing through many standing crops, and then turned off at right angles towards Kai on the right. Four miles more across open fields, over which no sort of road had yet been made, the route being just indicated by lines of stones at intervals on either side, and the camp at Kai was reached. This we found rather a picturesque spot on very stony ground sloping gently down to a small river. The village which gave its name to the post was perched on a hill above the opposite bank. To the north the Samana range and its now famous forts were in full view, and in the distance a haze of mingled smoke and dust hanging in the air showed where Shinawari lay. The 1st Battalion 2nd Gurkhas and two squadrons of the 18th Bengal Lancers were already encamped here, and the former had very kindly cleared our camping-ground for us. This was the Gurkha regiment that suffered so heavily in the second action of Dargai fifteen days later, and the courtesy and consideration we experienced at their hands at Kai enabled us to some slight extent at least to experience the loss they incurred by the deaths of Major Judge and Captain Robinson as the result of that disastrous fight.

Every day's march from Kohat had brought us at each succeeding halting-place to a higher level, and the temperature became daily cooler. The elevation of Kohat above the sea is 1768 feet, and though the rise had seldom been perceptible, we had mounted

each day well over 500 feet, for Kai stood at a level of 3500. Shinawari was, or seemed to be, if anything a little lower, looking at it from Kai. All were glad the next day's march was only a short six miles, and we were played in there on the morning of the 6th October by the 3rd Gurkhas and 15th Sikhs.

CHAPTER III.

AT SHINAWARI

SHINAWARI lies close to the foot of the Samana range, slightly to the west of Fort Lockhart. A fort of considerable size had been built there on one end of a low ridge running roughly parallel to the main line of the Samana, guarding the passage over the Chagru Kotal into the Khanki valley. It was constructed, like most of the forts on that frontier, without the smallest regard to tactical requirements, in such a manner that an enemy who had once succeeded in reaching the outside walls could pick out the crumbling adobe for mortar in which the stones—all carefully hewn and squared at great expense—were laid, and so easily effect a breach without the slightest fear of being molested by the defenders. Consequently it was captured at the first rising of the Orakzais with no difficulty whatever, garrisoned as it was with merely a few police, and 56,000 rounds of Martini ammunition, which were stored there, fell into the hands of the tribesmen, in addition, of course, to the rifles of the garrison. Beyond the removal of the main timbers, however, and the burning of most of the roofs, no great damage was done to the actual building, which afterwards supplied fairly comfortable quarters and mess for the staff, the post and telegraph office, and a variety of baboos of sorts. Some time later a bit of stabling there was appropriated for the use of sick and wounded officers passing through from the front, who greatly appreciated the comparative comfort of lying on clean ground within four walls, after a spell of cold nights in hospital tents.

When the Battalion marched in to Shinawari, the only regiments there were the 3rd Gurkhas, the 15th Sikhs, two squadrons 18th Bengal Lancers, and some Jhind Infantry. No British troops had as yet arrived. The camp was situated, facing north, on a broad stretch of fairly level ground, sloping gently up towards the Kotal, where the hills took a turn towards the west and formed a sort of wide semicircle round our front. It was bounded on the right, or east, by the ridge on which the fort stood, and we found the Jhind Infantry encamped there close up to the fort, guarding the right face of the camp. We were told off to form camp on the flat below the ridge, fronting north at right angles to it, the Sikhs continuing the line on our left, and the Gurkhas beyond them. A stream at the bottom of a hollow formed the left boundary of the camp, though later on the 2nd Gurkhas occupied a detached hill beyond the stream on the left front, that being the direction from which most of the sniping had come. In addition to the two native regiments mentioned above as having been already in camp, there was a considerable collection of grain-bags, compressed *bhusa*, and other stores and provisions, which grew daily in bulk as continuous relays of bullock carts, camels, transport trains, and every conceivable variety of pack animals poured in their loads to add to the mass.

It was more or less certain that little food for man or beast could be looked for in Tirah, and that the invading army must therefore take into the country in its train ample provender not only for the 12,000 odd fighting men composing the force, but also for a nearly equal number of non-combatant followers and some thousands of animals. Before the start could be made, then, a vast quantity of stores had to be collected, and naturally the nearer to the point of departure the better. At one time it was surmised that simultaneous advances into Tirah would be made from two or three different points over various passes

a plan of campaign which had and perhaps still has many supporters, and one to which some colour of belief was lent by orders which were at one time issued for the 1st Division to concentrate at Kai, whilst the 2nd concentrated at Shinawari. But eventually both Divisions were ordered to concentrate at Shinawari and advance from there, taking with them full supplies for ten days.

As an advanced depôt Shinawari possessed the advantages of being as the crow flies barely four miles from the top of the Chagru Kotal, the pass over which it was proposed to advance into Tirah, whilst it was separated by little more than ten miles of country, presenting little obstacle to rapid road making, from the tonga road between Kohat and Bannu. The distance from Kohat, the base proper of the expedition, which itself was thirty-two miles from the railway terminus at Kushalgarh, was close on fifty miles, and this long line of communications was liable at almost any point to attack by raiding parties descending from the mountainous territory inhabited by Orakzai tribes which extended all along its northern flank. It was therefore guarded by strong garrisons at the intervening posts of Usterzai, Hangu, and Kai, from which parties were sent out daily to picquet the heights commanding the road from the north, and also to escort convoys passing along to the front. A light railway through to Shinawari, from the bank of the Indus opposite Kushalgarh, would have been of inestimable service in quickening the despatch both of troops and supplies over those eighty miles, and would have lessened the labours and difficulties of the commissariat and transport departments to an extent scarcely to be realised by any but eye-witnesses of the enormous volume of traffic along that road. However, as far as Shinawari there was a road, one on which, up to within some ten miles, a regular tonga service had been established long before this

expedition. These last ten miles or so consisted, it is true, in most places of little more than a wide track marked out and cleared of large stones, bushes, stumps, and the like more serious obstacles. Nevertheless it admitted of wheeled traffic, and so might by courtesy be called a road. From Shinawari onwards, where the route left the more level country at the foot of the Samana and turned at right angles due north up into wild regions, where such a thing as a wheeled conveyance, even of the roughest description, had never been known, the transport problem assumed proportions which threw all previous difficulties into comparative insignificance.

An old mountain path led up from Shinawari over the Chagru Kotal into the Khanki Valley and beyond to Tirah. Work had already begun on this when the Regiment marched into Shinawari, in order to smooth the way at least for the first few miles of the advance; and before long, in addition to sundry Divisional companies of Sappers and Miners, and two Pioneer regiments, 1000 Punjabi coolies were also busily engaged in roadmaking; so that when at last the start was made from Shinawari on the 20th, a fortnight later, the five long miles up to the top of the Kotal were very fairly good marching. Beyond that, on the descent from the Kotal, the activity of the enemy in worrying the working parties had prevented any great amount of improvements being carried out, and marching in single file, a somewhat singular but in such country usually inevitable method for troops to advance in a hostile land, became the order of the day.

It was on the 6th October, as will have been seen, that the Regiment marched into Shinawari, little expecting to spend a solid fortnight there, and were shewn what then appeared a particularly unpromising piece of ground to pitch their camp upon. Later on, when we had become accustomed to squat for the night on a rocky hill top on picquet duty, or to lie

down just wherever nightfall might have overtaken us, the place likely enough would have seemed not amiss, or its many obstructions might even have been welcomed as affording a certain amount of shelter. But on such occasions there was no camp to pitch, and no necessity to make beautiful straight paths and rows of tents all faultlessly aligned. This is a sufficiently simple operation on a trim *maidan*, but quite another matter when the ground is thickly strewn with rocks, stones, thorny scrub, and worst of all a species of dwarf palm with stem and roots of such exceeding toughness that, when that ground was cleared after two days continual labour, there was scarcely a single tool left sound in the whole of the field service equipment, which the Pioneers were engaged in repairing for days afterwards. However, the stones came in very handy afterwards for wall building, and the thorn bushes for *abatis*. That abominable dwarf palm was equally useless alive or dead. It would not even burn decently.

On the 7th October we had a great excitement in the shape of the first glimpse of a real live enemy. He was some three or four miles off, it is true, a few dozens of him, on the hill-tops west of the Kotal, Dargai way, so we could not be said to have seen very much of him; but still, there he was, plain to see, even with the naked eye of a man with good sight in that marvellously clear atmosphere. He made no immediate effort to make closer acquaintance with the camp, but maintained an attitude of distant respect.

Two days later, however, it really did seem likely he might put in an appearance more within reach. About noon on the 9th, a Saturday, a message was received from Fort Lockhart, by heliograph, to say a *lashkar* of 15,000 men had advanced to within six and a-half miles, and that an attack upon the camp might be looked for within twenty-four hours. That made things hum a bit. There were then still only

the two native regiments present besides ourselves, and 15,000 is a tall order. A wall of loose stones had already been raised along the ridge on the eastern face of the camp, from the fort to the north-east corner, and a similar wall was immediately started along the north front. The number of loose stones strewn everywhere on the surface made it possible for a company to build as great a length of wall as they could man, of a sufficient height and thickness to afford excellent cover from any bullet, in a few hours, and before dark the front of the lines was well protected in this way. Additional security was lent by a deep row of cut thorn bushes spread along in front of the wall to form an *abatis*. The moon was at the full that night, which, while it made it impossible for any of the enemy to approach unobserved within two or three hundred yards of the place, threw into strong relief the position of the camp, and rendered the tents in particular extremely conspicuous. Orders were accordingly issued for all tents to be struck. On subsequent occasions, instead of being struck altogether, they were simply pitched inside out, the dark blue linings being equally effective in concealing them from however brilliant a moonlight. Half the Regiment were on picquet duty along the wall. The men had their Gathri coats and blankets, and slept close under the wall, sentries being posted with orders to kneel at intervals of twenty-five yards. The nights had now begun to be distinctly chilly, and those few officers who had happened to provide themselves with *poshteens* were already objects of envy to their less fortunate comrades.

After all these warlike preparations it was decidedly damping to the general enthusiasm when the witching hour of midnight arrived and passed without the sign of an enemy, and leaving little hope of any fight that night. Your Afridi is not an early bird, and never indulges in the daybreak attacks so much affected by savages of other lands. Nor is he

much addicted to midnight firing, preferring the warmth of some stuffy hole to sleep in even to the keen delights of loosing off his rifle or *jezail* at a distant camp, after, that is, ten or at the latest eleven o'clock. So when the first half of the night passed unbroken by the crack of a sniper's gun it was fairly certain the 15,000 were not abroad.

Doubtless they were kept fully informed of all that went on in camp, and may have heard arrangements had been made to give them a warm reception. The heliograph from Fort Lockhart sent no more alarming messages, but wall building continued with unabated vigour all Sunday, and again before dusk camp was as it were cleared for action, and half a battalion once more picqueted the wall. The force in the morning had received a reinforcement by the arrival of the 2nd Gurkhas, under Colonel Travers. This evening something did happen. At 10.15 the peace was disturbed by the sound of a volley fired into the camp, so excellent a volley too, evidently fired by word of command, that those who had not heard the bullets whistling overhead had difficulty in believing it could have come from the enemy. One of the bullets went through the mess tent of the 15th Sikhs, and made a hole in a chair there, but that was the limit of the damage. Few in the Regiment had ever heard a shot fired in anger before. The effect was electrical. Every officer and man flew out armed to the teeth, without waiting for orders, and fell in on the place previously appointed for each company in case of an alarm. For an hour and a-half we stood by, awaiting events, before the order came for those not on picquet to turn in; but never the ghost of another shot was heard that night beyond the one mysterious volley. Out of the silence of the night it came, and the silence swallowed it up again.

It was amusing to contrast the effect of this our first experience of being sniped with later occasions when the novelty had worn off. Instead of starting

up from his sleeping-place and rushing off to wall or parading ground, hastily buckling on belts, a man would just stir in his sleep, and with a muttered curse at the enemy who had made that sanguinary noise turn over on the other side and compose himself to sleep again. Sniping can also be taken more quietly when one is conscious of a low wall or a slab of compressed *bhusa* between one's head and the sniper. At first there was a foolish idea afloat that it was *infra. dig.* to take any such simple precaution, but that did not last long. It is such an extremely unsatisfactory way out of existence to be shot in your sleep or at dinner, as happened with disagreeable frequency, especially to officers. Everybody has heard of the advice given by an old soldier in this campaign to a comrade newly arrived at the front, "Don't you get near no officers or white stones and you'll be all right," and the numerous occasions on which officers were hit after dark—on one night at Maidan the only casualties from sniping were two officers—left little room for doubt that the position of mess bivouacs or tents was carefully noted by the enemy in daylight, and that rifles were probably aligned on them ready to be fired as soon as darkness made it safe to do so with impunity. Accordingly in most camps where troops made any stay, the men slept in trenches, or with a low wall or parapet of earth at their heads, whilst officers had holes dug to lie in, a practice which, though it combined comparative safety from stray bullets with considerable protection from cold, was probably responsible for a good deal of fever. At Shinawari, where officers were still on the 80lbs. scale of baggage, most of them rejoiced in camp beds, nor had sniping yet developed to any serious extent. But there were vast pyramids of *bhusa* bales about the place, and a square of it made not only a capital seat by day, but a comforting thing to place behind your head at night when the sniper was abroad. High walls of this stuff were built

round our hospital tents, and a traverse was made of it about the centre of our piece of front wall. *Bhusa*, as every old Indian knows, is the staple food of oxen and other beasts of burden in that country, and consists of the stalks of various grains trampled and bruised into small pieces by the feet of oxen, so that the ox that treadeth out the corn acts also as his own chaff-cutter. Tons upon tons of this stuff were collected at Shinawari, compressed by hydraulic power into square bales bound with strong wire, five of which formed a camel's load. The penetration table given in the Manual of Military Engineering does not state what thickness of compressed *bhusa* is proof against a Lee-Metford bullet, but even that could hardly pierce one of those bales.

The men became experts in building loose stone walls during our stay at Shinawari. They had ample practice at it there. On most days two or three companies went out of Camp, either to act as covering parties to the road-makers, or to collect sticks for axe-handles or supports for bivouac tents, or one thing or another. One morning by way of variety the Battalion was taken out to practice the attack, in the direction of the Kotal, and realized very forcibly that the pretty little manœuvres and formations of the parade ground or ordinary field day on the plains, have mostly to be chucked overboard when it comes to scrambling about hills like the side of a house, as was the case with most things laid down in the Infantry Drill. Some day perhaps we may get a drill book which is not merely borrowed from continental models, concerned only with systems of European or civilized warfare, and in which some further attention is devoted to savage warfare than the present single page in a book of three hundred. Another point brought home to us somewhat painfully that morning was that putties were a poor protection against the grass seeds of the neighbourhood. There was a good deal of thin coarse grass in places, armed

with masses of barbed seeds, which had an unpleasant way of working through putties and trousers and burying their heads in your legs, so that we returned to camp with ankles, calves, and knees stuck all over like pincushions. Otherwise the morning was quite unexciting. We got a fine view from the top of one of the lower hills at the foot of the Pass, but saw no sign of anything like an enemy. One or two natives were gathering in the last of their harvest near a small village, at the head of a long valley running up towards the Kotal, and in the opposite direction a *maidan* was visible, some two or three miles west of the Camp, on which at least a thousand head of cattle, probably driven down from Tirah, were peacefully seeking their meat, after the manner of the Indian *byl*, from a soil apparently destitute of any blade of nourishment.

After their single volley into camp on the Sunday night, the enemy remained quiet on the Monday. One shot only was heard that day, which, though not fired in anger, narrowly missed doing serious mischief. It came from the tent of a long officer who had lately joined the regiment, with a very superior revolver, which he had carefully loaded when going out with some covering party in the morning, and unfortunately omitted to unload on his return to camp. His soldier-servant—we each had a soldier-servant during the expedition—thought he would clean the revolver, and being a little hazy on the subject, called in a friend to assist him. They sat down to examine the thing together, with the result that the revolver went off, and after first making a neat hole in one of their shirt sleeves, passed through two officers' tents, and sang gaily off into the lines of a squadron of the 18th Bengal Lancers, recently arrived in camp, where it finally found a billet in the back of an unlucky *Sowar* 150 yards away, inflicting a severe though happily not a dangerous wound. It was a capital illustration of the carrying powers of that revolver,

but one which the 18th naturally did not relish much, and a sad and woe-begone individual was its owner that evening.

On Tuesday night a slight epidemic of sniping broke out again about 9.45, but was stopped by a volley from the Jhind Infantry on the ridge to our right. The strength of the picquets had been greatly reduced that night, by order of Colonel Richardson, of the 18th Bengal Lancers, who had arrived and taken command of the camp. Next day small parties of the enemy appeared late in the afternoon on some ridges below the pass, a little nearer than before, and at the same time as on the previous night sniping began from various directions all round the front of camp, and lasted about half an hour, the companies on picquet at the wall replying by an occasional volley in the direction where the flashes of the enemy's shots appeared. One of their bullets killed a valuable charger belonging to a transport officer back in the middle of the camp, and another broke a *dandi's* leg. A few spent bullets, fired from *jezails*, fell in our lines, one upon the top of the mess tent, and rolled to the ground without even piercing the canvas, whilst another dropped clattering among the mess *degchis* close by. Two officers of the regiment were standing by the wall on the left of our lines, near a Sikh sentry, watching for flashes of the snipers' guns, when a bullet struck the ground almost at their feet. They began feeling about on the ground to look for it. The sentry promptly, without altering his position, stooped down and picked it up by his boot. It had struck him on the knee. The man had remained standing at ease without moving a muscle!

This was the last effort made by the enemy to annoy us in camp for some days. The remainder of the week passed quite peacefully, and fresh regiments kept marching in almost daily; the K.O.S.B.'s on Oct. 14th, the Gordons and a mountain battery on the 15th, and the Dorsets and 3rd Sikhs on Sunday the

17th, until there were 8,000 troops in camp. The Regiment was ordered to return to Kai on the 10th, to join the 1st Division there, and had only been detained at Shinawari in view of the uncomfortable proximity of a large *lashkar* the other side of the Kotal, and the smallness of the force in the camp. As regiment after regiment of the 2nd Division marched into Shinawari we expected every day to be sent back to our own brigade at Kai. Then somebody said we were to be transferred to the 2nd Division, being with them already. The arrival on the 17th of the 3rd Sikhs, who also belonged to the 1st Division, knocked the probability out of that, and gave some colour to the next rumour that arose, which was that the divisions and divisional staff were to be abolished and the force reorganised on the brigade system, a thought fathered by the wish perhaps. But strange rumours were perpetually in the air at Shinawari, as in most big camps, where nobody knows anything certain. We had got decidedly bored with the place after ten or eleven days of it. Even the ordinary afternoon amusement of scanning the distant hill tops through glasses for signs of the enemy had failed, for lack of any enemy to find, and every day the camp grew more crowded, dusty and uncomfortable. A dense haze of dust and smoke hung over it night and day, and no doubt helped to increase the numbers of sick, which swelled daily. It was therefore an immense relief to everybody when at last orders were issued from headquarters at Fort Lockhart for the advance on the 20th. No further mention was made of our return to Kai.

Whilst at Shinawari the Battalion received an addition to its strength of four officers and 176 men. The latter arrived on October 8th, under Captain Slessor, 2nd Lieutenants Ritchie and Hobbs. On the 16th, Lieutenant Leveson-Gower, who had been away on transport duty with the Mohmand Expedition, put in an appearance, and on the 19th Captain Marshall

returned from duty with the Malakand Field Force, where he had been attached to the Royal West Kent Regiment. 2nd Lieutenant Attfield was so unfortunate as to be bowled over thus early in the day by enteric fever, and was admitted to hospital on the 17th.

The party that arrived under Captain Slessor on the 8th had encountered a somewhat remarkable series of misadventures on their journey. They consisted of B Company from Ranikhet, and all the time-expired men of the Battalion, who had originally been left behind at Bareilly to go down and embark for home at Bombay, until orders were subsequently received that all time-expired men were to be detained in India till the close of operations on the Frontier.

B Company had with E been on detachment all the summer at the Standing Camp, Ranikhet. When on the approach of the cold weather all the troops at Ranikhet made their annual migration down into the plains, this company was detailed to form the Winter Section, as it is called, and remain on to garrison the hill station, which seemed to give the last blow to all hopes of the Regiment getting employed on service. Accordingly they moved into Winter quarters, started canteen, coffee shop and library, and settled down generally for the cold weather.

Just before Church Parade on Sunday morning, September 19th, a welcome telegram arrived from the Adjutant at Bareilly, to say the Regiment was under orders to join the Reserve Brigade at Rawal Pindi, and in the evening orders were wired up that the Company was to rejoin them there with the least possible delay. By midday on the Monday all institutes and accounts were wound up, everything handed over, and the Company packed up and ready to start, when a fresh telegram brought orders that they were to wait until a detachment of Gurkhas came in from Almora to relieve them. This entailed two

days' delay, and it was not till the Wednesday they were able to get off. Nothing but the most deplorable transport was available then, and the ramshackle hill carts provided for the baggage constantly broke down on the way; but by dint of laying violent hands on any useful carts or bullocks they could pick up on the march, and transferring loads, the Company succeeded in reaching Ranibagh, the Rest-camp just above the railway terminus at Kathgodam, usually a five days' march, by ten o'clock on the Saturday morning. Permission to train on to Bareilly the same day, which was asked for by telegram, was refused, and so a further delay of two days was caused. They might easily have reached Bareilly in comfort that evening, whereas it was not till Monday afternoon that ninety-six of the hungriest, dirtiest, and most bedraggled, yet wholly-cheerful looking men ever seen, marched into barracks with scarce a dry rag on them, and with their baggage reduced to heaps of sodden pulp. For on Saturday night, as they lay in camp at Ranibagh, the heavens were opened and such a deluge of rain began as the neighbourhood had not seen for many years. Well for them was it that the rain had not begun a day earlier, when they were half way up the hill to Naini Tal. Three bridges on that road were swept away, one carrying a bullock cart and driver with it. A rock in the bed of the river just underneath Ranibagh, which stands at ordinary seasons thirty feet above the water, was hidden beneath the flood. The Rest-camp itself was half under water, and the men almost drowned out of their tents during the night. Their rations came down from Naini Tal early on Sunday morning, before the road was totally blocked, though in rather a soaked condition, and were sent on to the railway station, where not very successful efforts were made to cook them with sodden wood in a large goods shed, to which the Company was marched as soon as possible for shelter.

The Kichcha river flows roughly parallel with the railway, scarcely 200 yards away from the station, and closer still further down. The train was due to start at two p.m. and the men were put into it. All day long the rain poured incessantly, solid sheets of it, and the river rose higher and higher, a thundering furious torrent, fed by a thousand mountain streams, carrying down great timber trees and boulders in tumultuous confusion. The two officers strolled over to the bank to look at it, and stood by a new suspension bridge 200ft. long, which gradually was undermined and crashed down into the waves before their eyes, and in a moment was torn to ribbons and vanished, whilst only a faint crackling was heard above the din and roar of the water.

A long piece of the permanent way not far below the station was washed away. Fortunately a loop line had been built further away from the river to prepare for this emergency, but four or five hours work were required to connect it with the original line, so that it was past seven p.m. when the train left Kathgodam. An hour later it stopped dead somewhere in the country, and the guard brought the pleasing news that a mile of the railway had been washed away and that a big bridge over the river in front was reported unsafe. The latter happily proved a false alarm, but a good half mile of line was left with most of the ballast washed away and quite impassable for a loaded train, and in the dark it could not be ascertained whether the bridge was safe or not. The water had risen over the piers just up to the level of the rails. There was nothing for it but to wait for the daylight, when a train was sent up from Bareilly to the other side of the breach, containing the chief engineers of the line, break-down gangs of coolies, trolleys for transhipping baggage, and, more welcome still, food. Repeated appeals for rations had been wired down at every opportunity, and the indefatigable Station Staff Officer at Bareilly—Wemyss of the

Cameronians—had been waiting at the station there all night with hot suppers ready, which he sent up the line by the relief train. The transfer of the baggage across the damaged half mile of line was a lengthy and exceedingly grimy operation, but was accomplished with the aid of trolleys and a good deal of bad language, and by two p.m. the train at last reached Bareilly, just twenty-four hours after the start had been made from Kathgodam, fifty miles only away.

Next morning, Sept. 28th, the party, increased by the addition of sixty-four time-expired men and Lieut. Ritchie, which brought their numbers up to 160 men, left early for Umballa *en route* to join the Battalion at Pindi, and got in at nine o'clock in the evening. At Umballa a telegram was awaiting them containing the joyful news that the Regiment had been ordered on to Kohat, and that they were to come on there direct. For unknown reasons, however, a train on could not be provided till the evening of the following day, the 29th, when they started for the next Rest-camp at Mian Mir. Ill-luck continued to pursue them. During the night one of the sergeants, Doy, of E Company, was taken very ill. There was no medical assistance to be got, and the unfortunate man, who had got into the train perfectly well at ten in the evening, was lifted out of it dead at Mian Mir at eight the following morning. He had eaten a tin of preserved salmon at the coffee shop of the Umballa Rest-camp, and for a wager finished it all himself, with the result that he died of ptomaine poisoning within twelve hours; a particularly strong, healthy man, and sober and steady in his habits. The symptoms of ptomaine poisoning are almost identical with those of cholera, so much so, that even a *post-mortem* cannot absolutely solve the doubt, and notwithstanding the fact that the man had just come from a district entirely free from cholera, a junior doctor, fresh from England, who happened to be on duty at the station hospital whither the body

was immediately conveyed, diagnosed the case as one of cholera, and instructions were accordingly sent up to the Rest-camp that the whole party was to be isolated for the usual period of quarantine.

This was a cheerful prospect, ten days of cholera camp at Mian Mir, of all horrible places, with the base of the expedition four or five days away, and every chance of operations beginning before the party could get even as far as that. The officers of the party flew round Mian Mir and Lahore, and made themselves a perfect nuisance to every official in the place; but while all of them, from the G.O.C. and P.M.O. downwards, were wholly agreed that it was in the last degree unlikely to have been a case of cholera, not one would take the responsibility of upsetting the opinion of a junior doctor new to India. It was a civilian eventually and a native to boot, the head of the Mayo Hospital at Lahore, who wrote a decided opinion and gave the party a clean bill of health, so that they escaped from Mian Mir after only two days' detention, and took train rejoicing for Pindi on the morning of Saturday, October 2nd.

On arrival at Pindi that evening at ten o'clock they heard that the Regiment again had moved on from Kohat, so that it seemed like chasing a Will-of-the-wisp that perpetually vanished just as they were on the point of overtaking it. Nobody knew where they had gone, but anyhow it was in the right direction, towards the front, and every assistance was given to the party to push on after them. Cooked rations for the following day were ready, and there was a train due to leave for the railway terminus at Khushalgarh at two the same night. Pindi was the last point on the whole journey where any help whatever was to be got from staff officers. Henceforth they shifted entirely for themselves. It was futile to wire ahead for transport, rations, and other requirements. As often as not in those times so great was the pressure upon the telegraph department that men

marching travelled faster than "State Urgent" messages. Nor, if the telegram had got through in time, did it make much difference. The local Station Staff and Camp officers were either too busy or too inexperienced to take any notice. Consequently, at the end of a march, the party on arrival at a camp seldom found anybody expecting them and never found anything ready. However, they managed to beg, borrow, and occasionally steal what they wanted, and got on somehow without any further delays.

At Pindi the train to Khushalgarh came in crammed already with passengers. The situation was explained to the guard, who looked the other way whilst the necessary number of compartments were cleared of the usual mob of natives, volubly but vainly expostulating against being forcibly bundled out of their seats and dumped down upon a strange platform at midnight. Khushalgarh should have been reached by 9.30 a.m., but it was noon and uncommonly hot before the train got in. Nobody met the train, and there was no sign of any transport, but the stationmaster said there was a Rest-camp across the river a mile and a half off. A few men were left at the station on baggage guard, and the rest marched off to the camp. The camp contained several rows of tents, two natives asleep in one of them, and an astounding quantity of sand and dust. Of food or transport there was not a vestige. One of the natives pointed out a house in the distance as being the place where the S.S.O. might be found. An officer of the party tramped off to find that individual, but met there nobody but a sort of *chuprassi* from whom he ascertained that the transport lines were back across the river and that rations could only be procured at a place some three miles down the railway from the station. It was past six o'clock before the officer in question got back to the Rest-camp with rations and transport for marching that night seventeen miles to Gumbat.

From Khushalgarh to Shinawari was almost exactly eighty miles. This was, of course, over the same ground as the Regiment had traversed a few days before, of which mention has already been made. The party accomplished it in five days, leaving Khushalgarh shortly before midnight on Sunday, October 4th, and reaching Shinawari at 6 p.m. on the Friday. They picked up sixteen more men dropped by the Regiment on the way, and so marched in to Shinawari 176 strong with three officers. Of the original ninety-six who left Ranikhet every single man landed sound at the end of the eighty mile march.

DARGAI HEIGHTS.

From a sketch by Captain F. B. MAURICE, 2nd Batt. Derbyshire Regiment.

[*To face page 55.*

CHAPTER IV.

DARGAI.

ON the 17th October orders were at last issued by Sir William Lockhart, from his headquarters at Fort Lockhart, for the advance of the force into Tirah to be begun on the 20th. On that and the following day the 2nd Division, under General Yeatman-Biggs, was to march over the Chagru Kotal as far as Khorappa, a village on the near side of the Khanki river. On the 22nd they were to cross the river to Khangarbur, whilst the 1st Division left Shinawari to follow them to Khorappa. On the 23rd the 2nd Division were to advance from Khangarbur towards Ghandaki, the last halting place below the Sempagha Pass, whilst the 1st Division marched on Khangarbur from Khorappa.* Thus the whole force would be brought up into position ready for the attack on the Sempagha Pass, where it was expected that the enemy would make his principal stand, by the 24th.

The 20th was some ten days later than the date originally designed for the opening of offensive operations. The necessity for this delay had arisen partly from the unexpected protraction of the Mohmand expedition, which had detained several of the troops

* The name of Khorappa (pronounced Cur-rupper) was subsequently employed to designate the camp at Khangarbur, on the north side of the Khanki river, at which the two divisions concentrated, between the 21st and 27th, preparatory to the capture of the Sempagha. The Khorappa here referred to is the village shown under that name on the old map, of which a copy was issued to every officer at the beginning of the expedition—about a mile and a half above the junction of the Narik Darra with the Khanki river.

detailed for the Tirah force, and partly from the immense difficulty experienced by the transport department in providing a sufficient number of serviceable pack animals for conveying even the extremely restricted allowance of baggage authorized for the troops on taking the field. Field and staff officers rejoiced in a whole mule to themselves, whilst the ordinary regimental officer shared his mule with two others, and one mule carried the entire belongings of six British soldiers. It will be obvious that such a scale did not admit of a very extensive wardrobe, especially when it is borne in mind that provision had to be made for considerable cold, and that the above included all that could be carried in the way of bedding and blankets. A mule carries 160lbs., so that the regimental officer started for Tirah with 54lbs. of baggage only, in addition to what he carried on his back, and the British soldier with no more than half that amount. Tents were, of course, out of the question. Three mules were also allowed for each regimental mess, and the commissariat carried eight days' rations for all troops on from Shinawari. A day or two before marching out from there the officers commanding companies of the Battalion were assembled at the orderly-room tent, to discuss details of the articles to be carried on the mules for the men, and it was decided that for each man the following should be taken: Waterproof sheet, three blankets, cardigan jacket, sleeping-cap, serge trousers, flannel shirt, pair of socks, mitts, and boots. Their great-coats were all carried together on separate mules, which formed part of the "obligatory" transport, and they marched in khaki with putties, and wore their Gathri coats, rolled on their backs below their mess tins. The leather covers of these were very soon discarded as useless, and the tins made dull to prevent their glistening in the sun. All pipe-clay was of course washed out of the belts and straps, and to render these still more inconspicuous they were stained to

a muddy-looking brown by being soaked in tea. The general result looked more serviceable than ornamental. The remainder of the men's kit was left behind with the tents and heavy baggage at Shinawari, and three weeks later forwarded to us at Mastura, whence, after we had enjoyed the use of them for nearly a month, they were sent back to be taken round to meet us at Peshawar. British regiments were to march out not more than 700 strong all told, the remainder—800 being the total mobilization strength—with one officer staying behind in charge of the heavy baggage at Shinawari. After the arrival of the party from Ranikhet with the time-expired men on October 8th, our strength at Shinawari was twenty-three officers and 787 rank and file, but by the 18th malaria and ague, caused chiefly by clearing bush and digging, had placed some hundred odd *hors de combat*.

Wednesday, October 20th, then, was the day appointed for the expedition to start. Meanwhile, the working parties employed in improving the road over the Chagru Kotal were constantly molested by sharpshooters occupying the heights to the west of the pass, and in particular by small bodies descending from the village of Dargai. It was reported that, until these were dislodged, work on the road down the other side of the Kotal could not be continued, and that two days' work was still required to make the descent possible for laden animals. Accordingly, on the 18th, the two brigades of the 2nd Division were ordered out under Sir Power Palmer, General Yeatman-Biggs being sick, to sweep the enemy off these heights, an operation which they effected with complete and brilliant success, gaining possession by mid-day of a practically impregnable position, with the loss of no more than three men killed and nineteen wounded. No British troops of the 1st Division were employed in this day's work, but from Shinawari a good deal of the fight could be seen with the aid of telescopes or

even field glasses, although it was all taking place some three and a half miles away. We spent most of the morning glued to our glasses, and could distinctly see the shells strike the face of the sangars and throw up clouds of dust, and hear the reports of the guns. No sounds of rifle fire reached us, but occasionally the smoke of a volley could be seen, presumably from the Martinis of the Gurkhas. It was all over by lunch time, and the heliograph sent down messages to tell us the heights had been captured with but trifling loss. From the distance it all looked so easy that nobody down in the camp realised in the least how brilliant a feat had been achieved before their eyes that morning. The more sensational incidents of the bigger fight that took place over precisely the same ground two days later have somewhat eclipsed the prowess of the 3rd Gurkhas and the K. O. S. B.'s on the 18th. But the fact remains that these two regiments gained, with their three men killed and nineteen wounded, identically the same results that entailed the loss of close on 200 on the 20th. It is true that they had not nearly so numerous an enemy to deal with, and that the threat of the 3rd Brigade in their rear must have had a great moral effect upon the tribesmen; but this brigade arrived too late on the scene to be of any assistance in the actual capture of the position, having been detained by the extraordinary difficulties of the circuitous route it had been obliged to take to carry out its turning movement, and consequently the whole brunt of the fight fell upon the troops of the 4th Brigade detailed for the frontal attack.

All this took place before mid-day, and nothing so far could have been more satisfactory. Down at Shinawari we wondered why the 2nd Division remained so long out, and were a little surprised when dinner time arrived with no sign still of their return. It was not till nearly ten p.m. that news of further and less successful fighting reached the

camp. One of the companies of the regiment was on picquet duty that evening, at the corner of the camp where the road came in from the Kotal, close also to the field hospitals, and to them it became very soon abundantly clear, from the number of the dead and wounded brought in, that there must have been much more serious fighting than we had imagined. A sergeant came in, driving before him two weary Kahars, staggering under a long burden lashed to a bamboo pole. "'Ere, where am I to put this 'ere corpse?" Then three or four dhoolies, and more lifeless burdens, and soon the doctors' hands were full enough. Men dribbled in by twos and threes. Some just threw themselves down on the ground where they were, as soon as they set foot inside the boundary wall, utterly spent. It was past eleven before the last few stumbled in, and some had marched out at four a.m., and none later than five. Most of the mischief had been done in evacuating Dargai. As soon as the retirement began the enemy, as usual, followed up and worried the rear guard, composed in this instance of regiments of the 3rd Brigade, the Gordons and 15th Sikhs, who between them lost two officers and thirty-one men. The total losses in the day were ten killed and fifty-three wounded. Of these casualties forty-one occurred in the retirement from Dargai, and it cost 199 more to retake it!

Next morning some Sikh native officers were asking their Chief "Kya faida?"—what was the use of it all? What, indeed? It is difficult to point to any single purpose served, any one object gained by that day's work. On the contrary, it must have deeply impressed upon the enemy the magnificent capabilities for defence of the Dargai position. Of its supreme importance as the key to the passage over the Kotal they needed no lesson. Witness the pains they had already taken to strengthen it by sangars before the 18th. It might have been imagined that the numerous watch-fires visible at and around Dargai

for two or three nights previous to the 18th, and in still greater numbers, after the 18th, would have conveyed some hint to the Staff of the importance of the place, even without the opportunities of inspecting it afforded by its first occupation. The operations of the 18th are described in the despatches as a reconnaissance. The sole object of a reconnaissance is to gain information. If there was one thing made more manifest that day than another, it was that the Dargai position was naturally well nigh impregnable; yet, while it was recognised that before the advance to Khorappa could be made two days later, "it would be necessary to clear the Dargai heights overlooking the road to the west" (to quote the words of the despatch), the whole advantage of their capture was thrown away by the order to evacuate. The troops of the two brigades of the 2nd Division started on the morning of the 18th with rations for the day only, and it was never intended originally that they should retain possession of the heights. Nevertheless when the position had been captured, the advisability of remaining there occurred so forcibly to General Westmacott, commanding the 4th Brigade, that the order to evacuate evidently came as a surprise. * Before complying with the order, General Westmacott referred to Sir Power Palmer, who confirmed it on hearing that it had come direct from headquarters. It is worth noting also that the 4th Brigade had with them their great-coat mules and water-mules, and were so far in a much better position for bivouacking on the ground for the night than the troops on the evening of the 20th, who had neither.*

* Colonel Hutchinson, in his book "The Campaign in Tirah," states, as the principal excuse for the failure to hold the Dargai heights when they had once been captured, that "the water supply of Dargai was at a spot called Khand Talao, nearly three miles away to the west, and the road to it was commanded throughout by adjacent heights, so that, in the presence of an enemy, water could not have been obtained for the troops unless these heights, as well as the village of Dargai, had been held in

The fact is that the Afridis completely upset all calculations by moving up in force from the Khanki valley, and offering so stubborn a resistance at Dargai on the 20th. All previous information had pointed to a belief that they intended to make their principal stand at the Sempagha, which was understood to present far more formidable difficulties to an assault than the event proved. The orders for the advance to the Sempagha, issued on the 17th, bear witness that no considerable resistance was anticipated short of that point. Not till the evening of the 19th was it realised that the enemy were proposing seriously to dispute the passage over the Chagru Kotal. Had this been foreseen, and had not the idea taken root that the Afridis were too busily engaged, in fortifying the passes over the Sempagha and Arhanga into their own territory, to be able to lend much assistance to the Orakzais on the Samana side of the Khanki river, there can be little doubt that a sufficient force would have been left on the 18th, in possession of the Dargai

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force." This statement is all the more remarkable in view of the fact that, on the excellent map of the position which he gives three pages before, are clearly marked both the small Talao (or tank) 100 yards below the village, containing muddy but not undrinkable water, which we used at first on the morning of the 21st, and also the larger tank some 500 yards further to the east, which would have afforded a sufficient supply of drinkable water to last a brigade for a week. The village lies, not on the top of the cliff where the enemy's sangars are constructed, but on the southern slope of the Narik Suk, on which we bivouacked for three nights after the battle. The summit of the Narik Suk completely dominates the village and the reverse slope of the enemy's position, and commands an extensive view of the country for miles around. It is strewn with large rocks, very much like a Dartmoor Tor, and abounds in natural cover. A battalion left there on the 18th could have set at defiance any number of tribesmen, and, supported by another battalion on the Kotal to connect it with the base and furnish it with supplies, could with little difficulty, in conjunction with the troops already in possession of the Samana across the valley, have effectually prevented any attempt of the Afridis to come up to meet us from the Khanki valley. But it is easy to be wise after the event.

heights, to hold them against all comers, and so avoid the necessity of recapturing them on the 20th.

On that date was begun the advance of the 2nd Division, under General Yeatman-Biggs, to Khorappa, in accordance with the original programme, which was only modified so far that the 4th Brigade, which at first was to have followed the 3rd on the 21st, was now ordered to accompany it. Two of the regiments of the 4th Brigade, the Northamptons and 36th Sikhs, were up in the forts on the Samana, and they were to protect the right flank of the advance. At the last moment two regiments of the 1st Division, the 3rd Sikhs and ourselves, were placed at the disposal of the General commanding the 2nd Division, "to assist him in the frontal attack" on Dargai, to quote the despatches again; though the general idea seems rather to have been that they should hold the enemy in check on the left flank, whilst the 2nd Division continued its advance to Khorappa, that the enemy, threatened in rear, would then retire from Dargai, and that no serious attack on the position would be necessary. A message to this effect came from Sir William Lockhart on the Samana Suk during the battle.

On the evening of Oct. 19th we turned in for the night at Shinawari in the full belief that we were to remain quietly there for another two days, little expecting what the morrow held in store for us. At one o'clock that night our commanding officer, Colonel Dowse, was roused up by a staff officer, who brought the order for us to parade at five a.m. and accompany the 2nd Division to the Chagru Kotal for the day, returning to camp the same evening. This extremely short notice did not allow of any but the scantiest preparations in the way of food for a long day's work; but before they fell in most of the men got some hot tea, and each had a chunk of "bully" beef and some biscuit served out to him to put in his haversack. Officers regaled themselves on biscuits

and cocoa, and the mess sergeant had provided substantial sandwiches to be taken with us. 4.30 in the morning is not an hour at which cold slabs of meat appeal to even the most robust appetite, so the light refreshment carried in our haversacks was practically all the food we had till noon the following day.

It was still dark when we paraded and marched off to the corner of the camp where the road to the Kotal began. The advanced guard had started at 4.30, composed of the 2nd Gurkhas. These were followed by the two British regiments of the 3rd (General Kempster's) Brigade, two mountain batteries, and then ourselves. A third mountain battery overtook and passed us about half way up the hill. The road up to the top of the Kotal was by that time fairly good, as for the last fortnight or more there had been large working parties engaged upon it, and the men were able to march up most of the five miles to the summit in fours. But there were constant checks and delays, every few minutes almost, so that although the gradients of the road were nowhere severe, it took us the best part of four hours to reach a square, ruined tower that stood on the top of the Kotal, commanding a view down on both sides. By the time we got there, about ten o'clock, the Gurkhas and Dorsets had already been sent off to the left of the road in the direction of the Dargai heights, and the three batteries had taken up a position close below the tower, from which they had just begun to open a slow, continuous fire, at a range of 1800 yards, upon the crest. Later on the 9th Mountain Battery on the Samana Suk joined their fire to that of the three on the Kotal, from a distance of 2500 yards, right across the valley, but ceased fire very soon, as their shells appeared to be falling short. The other three continued firing for four and a half hours, expending over 1300 rounds, but it is doubtful whether they produced much effect until the last

moment before the final charge, when the eighteen guns concentrated a rapid fire for three minutes upon the particular spot upon which the assault was directed.

The word Kotal appears to mean the summit of a pass leading from one valley into another, over a gap or depression in a mountain ridge, or between two ranges. Thus the Chagru Kotal is at the top of the the hill, 5525 feet high, between the plain on the southern or Shinawari side of the Samana range and the Khanki valley, but at the lowest point of the gap between the Samana Suk, or western extremity of that part of the Samana range on which stand Forts Gulistan, Saragheri and Lockhart, and the heights above Dargai. These heights continued to the north beyond the village of Dargai, form what is called the Narik Suk, from which a rough track drops down into the Narik Darra, a short distance above its junction with the Chagru defile, which again meets the Khanki river almost at right angles some two miles further on again. The road from Shinawari to the Khanki valley runs very nearly due north. At the Chagru Kotal it is overlooked on the east by the Samana Suk, a steep cliff rising precipitously to a height of some 700 feet above it, at a distance of from 700 to 800 yards. Opposite and nearly parallel to this, on the western side of the Kotal but 1000 yards from it, are the Dargai heights, which attain an elevation of slightly over 6600 feet, 1100 feet above the Chagru Kotal. Although the range from the Kotal to the enemy's sangars on the top of the heights was only 1800 yards, the distance to be traversed on foot was about a couple of miles. For the first mile or more the track followed a more or less level course, until passing through the village of Mamu Khan, it took a sharp turn to the right and began to zigzag up a very steep water-course, which became gradually narrower as it neared the top of a ridge running roughly parallel to the enemy's

position, and connected with it by a narrow col or saddle. This ridge was 400 feet lower than the crest of the position and some 350 yards from the foot of it. The angle of descent from the position to the top of the ridge, or rather to the narrow gap at which alone it was possible to cross the ridge, which elsewhere was precipitous on the side nearest the position, was less steep than the slope from the gap downwards.* Consequently, except at a point not far beyond the village of Mamu Khan, which was too distant from the position to be of any consequence, the attacking force was not exposed to the enemy's fire until they reached the gap. The approach to the gap was, as has been already stated, up a water-course which narrowed at the top until it formed a sort of funnel, not wide enough to admit of the passage of more than two or three men abreast, who as they issued from it found themselves on the end of a narrow ledge, 350 yards long to the foot of the position, exposed every inch of the way to a murderous fire from half a mile of sangared crest, thickly studded with an invisible enemy, who were deadly shots at 800 yards, and who at this short distance made every other shot tell. Such was the position that had to be captured from a numerous and powerful enemy, equipped largely with modern rifles, and sheltered behind stone sangars which three mountain batteries (and occasionally a fourth) pounded for nearly five hours with no appreciable effect. A more veritable death-trap it is impossible to conceive.

When Major-General Yeatman-Biggs arrived at the Kotal, and saw in what force the enemy were occupying the Dargai heights, he ordered a direct attack to be launched at them at once, the 2nd Gurkhas leading, supported by the Dorsets, with the

*The rough section of the last half-mile of the approach to the position, shown in the diagram opposite, will perhaps make the description clearer.

Gordons in reserve, while the Derbys were to fire long range volleys at 1200 yards from the village of Mamu Khan. This original order was subsequently so far modified that, on the representation of Colonel Mathias that his regiment were still somewhat fatigued after their severe fighting two days previously, we were detailed to take their places in the third line, and the Gordons were ordered to fire the long range volleys from Mamu Khan.* As the Battalion passed General Kempster at the Kotal, Colonel Dowse received orders from him that the Derbyshire were to form the third line, also that when the Dorsets advanced from the spot where those regiments were to concentrate, which the General pointed out, the Derbys were to cover their advance by fire.

These dispositions were no doubt communicated to officers commanding corps at the head of the long drawn out columns, but certainly could not penetrate very far back. The companies in rear simply followed on, playing blindly a game of "follow my leader," and having no notion as to the why or wherefore. The sight of groups of dingy figures, clustered round

* With regard to this point, Captain Bowman writes: "When we had got about half way up the hill to the Kotal from Shinawari, a staff officer gave me a note addressed to General Yeatman-Biggs, and told me to carry it as far as I liked and then hand it on to somebody else to take on. He said I could read it, and I did so. It said he had it from spies that the heights were held by 15,000 men. Curiosity, etc., prompted me to take it the whole way, and I handed it myself to General Yeatman-Biggs, who was with his staff on the Kotal, and then quietly stood near to try and pick up any information there might be. Almost immediately after this General Yeatman-Biggs gave out the briefest order for the attack: Gurkhas were to go first, Dorsets second, Gordons third, Derbys to fire long range volleys from Mamu Khan. From the few remarks made, the whole business was expected to be over in a very short time. Shortly after hearing this order given out, I started back to rejoin my company, and on the way overtook a staff officer who had been sent to tell Colonel Dowse the order, and from him again I heard we were only to fire long range volleys."

standards on the top of a distant hill, conveyed no certainty of any immediate fighting, until the welcome sound of guns booming from the Kotal stirred our pulses and quickened our footsteps, like a band striking up at the end of a weary march, with the hope that now at last we were to be engaged with this elusive enemy.

The path from the Kotal towards Dargai was only a narrow track, along which it was impossible to advance except in single file, so that a battalion spread over a good half-mile of it, and the Gurkhas and most of the Dorsets were already out of sight before the head of our battalion started upon it. After winding along this for about a mile, more or less on the level and fairly good going, we reached Mamu Khan, which had been set on fire on the 18th, and was smoking still. The Gordons, whom we had passed on leaving the road at the Kotal, occupied the village after we had passed through. A short distance beyond it the path ran along a level bit exposed to the enemy's fire, but too distant to matter. An occasional bullet fell close by, and kicked up the dust, but they evidently did not think it worth while to waste their ammunition at so long a range. Then the track—which after passing Mamu Khan could scarcely be recognised as a path—took a sharp turn to the right directly towards the position, and a stiff climb of about half a mile began, zigzagging up a water-course to the top of the ridge immediately beneath the position, so steeply that men were obliged to make constant halts to recover their breath before going on. This very steepness, however, had the immense advantage of affording complete protection from the enemy's fire.

When within some 200 yards of the top we were halted. Anything like regular formation on such ground was out of the question. Companies sat or lay down at slight intervals, the men of each section grouped round their section commander. What was

going on above we could not tell, or why we were halted. The slope of the ground lessened somewhat for the last fifty yards or so below the gap at the top of the ridge, so that from the spot where we lay nothing whatever could be seen, either of our own fighting line or of the enemy's position, except the left of it far away on our right. The sound of continuous heavy firing, however, told that there was warm work forward. It was now about eleven, and many of the men opened their haversacks for a chew at their "bully" beef, having eaten nothing but a mouthful or two at five. The sun was just hot enough to make the shade of a single large ilex, that grew close to where the rear company had halted, worth going a few yards out of the way to lie down under. We sat there for what seemed an interminable length of time, though it cannot have been much over an hour. All the while the rattle of volleys above us went on incessantly, sometimes with increased volume as a charge across the deadly open space was attempted. Constantly, too, the enemy's bullets, aimed too high at the crest of the lower ridge, sang shrilly and harmlessly away a few yards over our heads; whilst some 400 feet or more, right above us, the shells from the batteries at the Kotal soared through the air on their way to the enemy's sangars. From Mamu Khan on our right rear we could hear the crack of the Gordons' long range volleys, varied occasionally by the burr of the 16th Lancers' Maxim on their right. Presently wounded men, chiefly Gurkhas at first, began to come down past us, some supported by their comrades, some borne on blood-stained stretchers; then a dhoolie containing a Gurkha officer, dead; and still we sat, waiting. Before long dead men were being dragged down the steep slope by the legs with scant ceremony. After all, it did not hurt them, and the path had to be cleared.

It was not for some days afterwards that we heard what had been going on above us all the time;

how two companies of the Gurkhas first, under their commanding officer, Colonel Travers, had charged across the deadly space from the gap, losing sixty-seven men in ten minutes; how the survivors established themselves under scanty cover close beneath the cliff; how the second rush of the Gurkhas, led by their Major, was hurled back over the gap, with Major Judge shot dead and Captain Robinson mortally wounded; how Colonel Travers signalled back to the rest of his men to remain where they were till reinforced; how the Dorsets in their turn made gallant and repeated efforts to support the Gurkhas, and had section after section swept away as soon as they rushed across the gap, losing more men than any British regiment that day.

On the crest of the lower ridge to the right of the gap were occasional spots where cover could be obtained for firing volleys at the position above, though the steep *khud* in front made any advance there impossible. Some companies of the Dorsets occupied these, and kept up a heavy fire on the position, especially when a rush was made from the gap. Whilst we sat below in reserve, a cry came down of "More ammunition for the Dorsets." A helio was flashed down accordingly, and soon three ammunition mules appeared at the foot of the steep climb about half a mile below us, where the track skirted the side of a very precipitous hill. The leading mule came to a bad and extra steep bit of path, did not like the look of it, jibbed, backed, got his hind legs over the edge, made frantic efforts to recover his footing, was dragged down by the weight of the ammunition boxes, and rolled over down out of sight. The second mule promptly followed his example, deliberately and without any fuss, nearly dragging a *drabi* down with him. Transport officers and others familiar with the ways of the mule will tell you that instances are not uncommon when mules, weary of carrying heavy loads over frightful

tracks, grow sick of life, and purposely take headers down precipitous *khuds*. This looked remarkably like an instance of it. The third beast, which by the way was not a mule but a long-legged weed of a pony, let itself be coaxed along a little further, then took fright, reared up close to the edge, fell backwards and went down head over heels after the mules, with the last of the Dorsets' reserve ammunition. Incredible as it may appear, both the mules were got up subsequently little the worse for their fall, nor was any of the ammunition on this occasion left as a present for the enemy.

Shortly after this A Company, under Captain Menzies, and C under Major Wylly, were ordered up to relieve the Dorsets in the firing line, covering the advance or attempted advance through the gap. "They have our range all right," said the Dorset officer whom Captain Menzies relieved, as he showed him a bullet hole right through his helmet. Any man exposing himself for one moment there was immediately fired at, whilst the Afridis above had made so excellent a use of cover that not a man amongst them was visible, and the smoke of their rifles offered the only guide for the direction of our fire. Next B, D, and E companies were ordered up to the gap. B had marched out of camp in the rear of the battalion, and E immediately preceded them. This order had been maintained throughout, so that D went up first, followed at intervals by E and B. As these companies scrambled up to reach the point where the slope lessened, fifty yards or so beneath the gap, they came within view for the first time at close quarters of the enemey's position and of the state of things at the gap. Right opposite, only 350 yards away, rose a line of almost sheer cliff 400 feet above us,* lined for a length of some 400 yards with an

* 6619 feet was the actual elevation of the cliff; 6225 that of the gap.

invisible enemy whose rifles and jezails—chiefly rifles —were all levelled at the gap. Away to our right, out of sight from this spot, the cliff took a sharp turn backwards and became less precipitous, and it was round this turn that the track eventually followed led to the top. The gap itself, formed by the water-course narrowing to a funnel-end at the top, was bounded on the left by a large perpendicular piece of rock, and on the right by a jagged stony crest with an impossible descent on the further side. But the most hopeless part of the whole thing was the frightful block up in the gap. There must have been some 300 to 400 men jammed tightly together there, several wounded amongst them. Right in the mouth of the gap, and plastered against the rock on the left, squatted a number of Gurkhas, officerless, dogged and sullen, thirsting to revenge the slaughter of numerous comrades. The heroism of Colonel Travers' gallant regiment, who bore the brunt of the first assault and suffered more heavily than any regiment engaged, has not been so generally recognised as it deserved. Immediately behind them, completing the block, were a mass of Dorsets. So densely packed were all these men, and so encumbered with wounded, that until a line through them was cleared, as was done for the Gordons, it was only possible for any fresh troops to elbow a way through slowly one by one, and the continuous stream necessary to rush the place with any chance of success was then a physical impossibility. Nevertheless Captain Smith, who commanded D Company, the first of ours to come up, forced his way through the mass, and followed by his subaltern, Pennell, and three or four more men of the company who managed to struggle through at short intervals, made a dash across the gap into the open under a murderous hail of bullets. Before he had gone more than a few yards he fell, shot through the head, and the men behind him were mown down. Private Dunn was killed on the spot, and Private Pomberth

mortally wounded. Pennell, not knowing his captain was dead, won a V.C. by making gallant efforts to carry him back under cover. He got him some way with difficulty, and seeing some men lying on the ground called to them to assist. No answer came at first, until a man of the Dorsets lifted his head and answered, "We're all wounded, sir, except those that are dead." Then seeing that it was hopeless, he placed poor Smith's helmet over his face, the enemy's bullets whizzing around him all the time, and made for the shelter of the gap again. Another small party with Lieutenant Way fared no better. Way escaped with a bullet through the edge of one of his putties. Keeling, the colour-sergeant, and Spick, a private of D Company, were both severely wounded almost as soon as they crossed the gap. Both the men were subsequently awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal.

The crowd beneath the gap only grew deeper and denser as each successive company clambered up. Colonel Dowse told the officer in command of the Dorsets, who had now been engaged for a long time, that if they would make room he would charge across with the fresh troops of his regiment. This course, however, did not commend itself to the Dorset colonel, who was the senior, and the block continued. Our men and the Dorsets became very much mixed up, and all being dressed alike it was difficult for officers to distinguish their own men. No very clear orders had been communicated as to how the attack was to be driven home, and most of the company commanders were under the impression that they were merely fighting a containing action in front, whilst other troops carried out a turning movement to attack the enemy's flank. We had no knowledge at the time that the position had been stormed from this identical spot before, and all that could be seen of it tended to confirm a doubt whether the cliff in front of us could be scaled, even if the foot of it was

gained. The enemy's attention having been directed to the gap as the one means of approach by the first few rushes, a man had now but to show his helmet above the gap to draw down a torrent of bullets on the spot. Now and again small sections would still break away from the head of the crowd, and with magnificent courage attempt to run the gauntlet of that terrible fire, but only to add to the horrible heap of partly lifeless, partly crawling khaki that strewed the track beyond, a piteous spectacle of heroic but unavailing effort, whilst the exultant enemy waved his wretched rags of standards and yelled defiance from the heights above.

Men grew disheartened. Such fire could be faced no more. There was a dreadful pause for a full half-hour, during which the attack stood still. A helio was sent down to General Yeatman-Biggs that the troops could not advance. The engagement had lasted now four hours, and success seemed no nearer than at the beginning. The assault so far had failed, and failed completely. It was two o'clock; none of the 2nd Division had advanced a step beyond the Kotal towards Khorappa, and things looked remarkably ugly.

But the time and the man were now at hand. More than an hour before the Gordons had been ordered up from Mamu Khan, where their long-range volleys can hardly have been very effective, to reinforce the attack, and the 3rd Sikhs not long after them. These fresh troops had now climbed up to within a few hundred yards of the gap, and a signaller brought a helio message to our Colonel from the General to say, "The Gordons and 3rd Sikhs will attack; Derbys and Gurkhas in support; Dorsets in third line." Soon after some red tabs appeared—staff officers up to this time had been conspicuously absent—and we were ordered to withdraw our companies aside. Then arose a cheer from the spot below where Colonel Mathias, very much the right man in

the right place, had halted and closed up his regiment, and addressed them in that famous speech which will ever be connected in history with the name of Dargai. "Highlanders, the General says the position must be taken at all costs. The Gordons will take it." If ever one man's cool assurance and unbounded confidence in his regiment helped to turn impending disaster into brilliant success, it was done by Colonel Mathias' few strong words that afternoon. Roused to fierce enthusiasm by their trusted leader's stirring speech, and by the familiar skirl of the pipes, the Highlanders leapt to the assault. Up they came, a long thin string of men with stern, set faces, stumbling, scrambling up the steep in a frenzy of courage not to be gainsaid, amidst occasional spasmodic gasps from the pipes, and cheers from any who had breath to utter, a sight for those who witnessed it to remember all their lives.

But no longer was the attack to be attempted by the fruitless valour of small detachments and driblets of men struggling out through a crowded mass. As the Gordons neared the gap the word was passed up and shouted along to "clear a line for the Gordons," and the mass above surged and swayed apart and left a narrow pathway clear.

The Gordons enjoyed the inestimable advantage of being to a certain extent familiar with the ground, from having descended from Dargai two days before by the very path which they were now about to ascend. They therefore knew that once the dangerous space to the foot of the cliff was crossed the heights *could* be scaled. The other troops who had been engaged laboured under a horrible uncertainty as to whether they would be in any better position to gain the heights after crossing this space. The Dorset officers said after their first charge that they could not find a path across; that they rushed forward only to find themselves on the brink of a precipice. Moreover, shortly before the Gordons' advance, General

Kempster had asked for a rapid artillery fire to be concentrated on the enemy's sangars, and at this moment a perfect avalanche of shot and shell broke from the eighteen guns on the Kotal and swept over our heads upon the position. Under cover of this, combined with a torrent of "independent" fire from the Dorsets, Derbys and Gurkhas, the Gordons streamed through the gap, one after another as fast as they could clamber up, and dashed across the deadly open space beyond. Bullets whistled and spat all around them as thick as ever, but though a large number were wounded, fortune so far favoured them that but one officer and two men were actually killed, a smaller number than that lost by any of the other regiments.

Probably the enemy's fire grew wild and inaccurate under the storm of shrapnel that rained upon their sangars, aided by the sight of the now, at last, continuous stream of men pouring through the gap; for in quantity, at least, it had not abated one whit at first. In a momentary pause, after the first two groups of Gordons had passed, a company of the Derbys started up and followed them, and then another, and then, as from a dam let loose, the long pent-up mass at the gap broke through, and an indiscriminate crowd of Gordons, Derbys, Dorsets, Sikhs, and Gurkhas were rushing pell-mell across the open.* The day was won. Whether it was, as some think, that the enemy's supply of ammunition was running short after the four hours' fight, or whether they were cowed by their failure to stay

* With regard to the final charge, Captain Bowman writes as follows: "At Dargai, in the final charge, E Company followed Captain Slessor and B over the ridge, but the leading section of E, under Captain Bowman (Sergeant Rippon was senior N. C. O.), getting away first, made straight for the large rock behind which Colonel Travers and his brave Gurkhas had been obliged to take temporary shelter; a few officers, N. C. O.'s and men of the Derbys, Gordons, &c., had already joined this party, and after waving, shouting and waiting till a few more joined us,

the advance to the foot of their position, they broke and fled when the leading troops were still 200 yards below them. The final storming of the steep track to the crest, which a few resolute men amply supplied with ammunition might still have made impossible, was accomplished unresisted. When, at three o'clock precisely, the heights were crowned, beyond some splashes of blood and heaps of empty cartridge cases, no sign was visible of Afridi or Orakzai, alive or dead. This seems to preclude the belief that their losses can have been very heavy. Ours amounted all told to 199, including three officers killed, ten wounded (one fatally), and thirty-three men killed.

As the troops scrambled up on to the top of the cliff they rapidly formed up under their own company commanders, ready for further orders. But for that day fighting was over. Colonel Mathias at once called for a signaller from the nearest company, which happened to be E Company of the Derbys, and Captain Bowman placed at his disposal the signaller by whom he sent a message down to the General at the Kotal, to announce that the position was now in our hands.

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we moved straight up the hill together, and were without doubt the first party actually to reach the summit of the heights. A good ten minutes after we had reached the summit, Colonel Mathias, who had also joined this party, asked for a signalling flag; nobody had one, but I handed over to him Sergeant Cursley of E Company (signalling sergeant to the Regiment in Tirah), who coming up later had just reached the summit, and he improvised a flag and sent back Colonel Mathias' well-known message of the Gordons taking the heights. Several shots were fired at us when we first reached the top, and also from the valley on the other side later on when Colonel Dowse arrived on the scene."

NOTES.

The following notes, with the time of each occurrence, taken during the fight by an officer who watched it, evidently from the Kotal, and subsequently communicated by him to the Indian papers, under the *nom de plume* "Spectator," seem of sufficient interest to be reproduced here:

9.45 a.m. Enemy began firing as Gurkhas entered and left Mamu Khan village.

9.55 a.m. Eighteen mountain guns commenced firing incessantly up till 2.30 p.m. Not a gun was advanced nearer the enemy to support the infantry attack, although there was ample space for three batteries near Mamu Khan, where a battalion and a Maxim was posted.

10.15 a.m. Gurkhas began advancing under fire up a slope which ran more or less parallel to and below the enemy's sangars, which were on the Gurkhas' right.

10.30 a.m. Gurkhas crowned this slope.

10.45 a.m. One battery mountain guns on Samana Suk commenced firing across the valley on the enemy's sangars, but ceased fire very soon as the shells appeared to be falling short.

11.15 a.m. Gurkhas commenced rushes over bullet-swept zone under a murderous fire.

11.25 a.m. Dorsets helioed for more ammunition.

11.35 a.m. Fire of eighteen guns was now concentrated on enemy's sangars, while parties of Gurkhas again gallantly attempted rushes under a heavy fire. Note.—The enemy always reserved their fire until our rushes were made.

12 noon. Maxim gun, 16th Lancers, on right of Gordons at Mamu Khan fired several times.

12.20 p.m. Helio received by General Yeatman-Biggs from a senior officer that troops were unable to advance, the enemy's position being so strong.

12.30 p.m. Orders given for the Gordons to reinforce the attack, their place at Mamu Khan being taken by half the 21st Madras Pioneers.

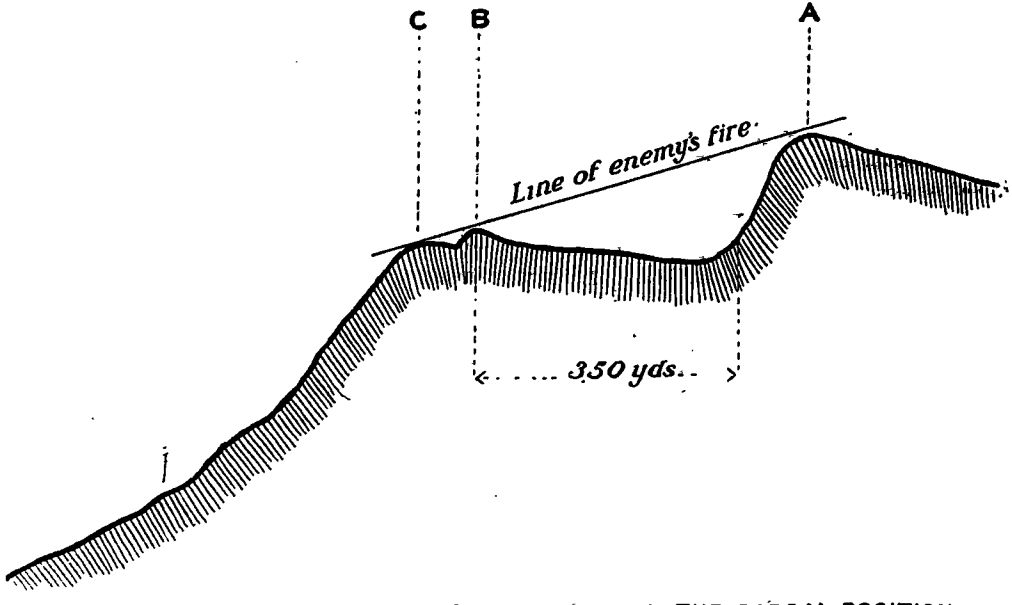
1.0 p.m. 3rd Sikhs sent to reinforce attack.

1.35 p.m. General Kempster proposes to attack with Gordons, Sikhs, Gurkhas, and Derbys.

2.0 p.m. Dorsets and Derbys tried rushes, but lost heavily, after which General Kempster then helioed to the Kotal to ask that a *rapid* concentrated fire should be made on enemy's sangars for three minutes, after which he would order infantry attack.

2.30 p.m. Rapid concentrated artillery fire. Under heavy fire the dangerous zone was rushed by Gordons, Sikhs, Gurkhas, Dorsets, and Derbys—Gordons leading.

3.0 p.m. The heights crowned—Gordons leading.



ROUGH SECTION OF THE GROUND APPROACHING THE DARGAI POSITION.

A is the enemy's position on the crest, *B* the gap on the lower ridge through which the attack was made. Immediately below *B* was cover, then thirty or forty yards of exposed ground, and then the ground sloped steeply down again at *C*, and below this was completely screened from view and fire of the enemy. Most of the casualties occurred at or just beyond *B*.

CHAPTER V.

DARGAI TO KHORAPPA.

As soon as the Dargai heights were crowned, Colonel Mathias, the senior officer on the spot, ordered the Derbys at once to occupy the Narik Suk, the top of which was nearly half a mile away to the north. On the way there, five or six shots were suddenly fired at us by some few of the enemy concealed in a hollow down the reverse slope of the hill, but this was their last effort. We were not molested again during the three days we spent on the Narik Suk. About five o'clock came an order that we were to remain where we were for the night. The hard won position was not to be handed over a second time to the enemy. A whole Brigade bivouacked there for the night, the Gurkhas and Dorsets on the actual position behind the enemy's sangars, and ourselves on the Narik Suk, the Gordons and Sikhs returning down to the Chagru Kotal, where they passed the night together with the remaining troops of the 2nd Division, the day being too far advanced for the interrupted march to be continued to Khorappa.*

The Regiment formed a line of picquets along the ridge of the Narik Suk, each consisting of a separate Company, from the top of the hill down to the ruins

* The despatch states in paragraph twenty-two, that "On the night of October 20th, Dargai was held by the 1st Battalion Dorsetshire Regiment, and 3rd Sikhs, supported by the 1st Battalion Gordon Highlanders, while the remainder of the troops bivouacked on or near the Chagru Kotal." No mention is made of the Derbys. Indeed there is very little in the despatch to show that they took any part in the engagement at all!

of Dargai, facing west, with their backs to the Chagru Kotal. What little daylight remained was spent in hastily constructing rough sangars on the ridge to afford protection from the enemy's fire, in case they made any fresh attack, but this precaution happily proved needless. Having started at five o'clock in the morning in full expectation of returning to camp in the evening, we had no food or blankets, and most of the men had long before emptied their water-bottles. The prospect of lying on a bare hill-side at an elevation of nearly 7000 feet at the end of a severe day's fighting under such circumstances was not a cheerful one. However, it was an experience that many a regiment underwent before the campaign was over, and it is the peculiarity of the British soldier, who in barracks will grumble consumedly if his beef is not cooked entirely to his liking or over similar trifles, to endure real hardship with admirable complacency. So it was on this occasion. The men settled down to make the best of things for the night, if not cheerfully, at least without a word of complaint. As darkness fell upon the mountains, the pangs of hunger and thirst were superseded by the keener discomfort of intense cold. Down below on the Kotal we could see the watch fires of happier mortals, who had been lucky enough to find fuel at hand, and perhaps food to cook at them. In the far distance were visible the few lights that showed where the camp lay at Shinawari, and where supper and tents had awaited our return in vain. It was cause at least for thankfulness that we were not among those who lay colder still in stark rows beside the hospital tents on the Kotal, never to fight again.

The night wore through somehow, and the men huddled together for warmth managed in some instances to snatch a few moments of fitful sleep. But khaki drill offers small protection from the night air at 7000 feet, even with the aid of a thick serge Gathri jacket, and the cold allowed but little sound

rest. Never was the blessed sun more welcome than when it shed its first gleams upon the shivering groups on that hill on the morning of Oct. 21st. The signallers were soon at work flashing down clamours for food, and brought the glad news that rations had left camp at daybreak. So blocked was the road up to the Kotal by transport of the 2nd Division, that it was close on noon before the mules arrived and food could be served out. The only marvel was that they had ever reached the top of the hill at all, seeing that it was difficult even for a man to clamber up the last part. But it is almost literally true that where a man can climb, a mule will follow, with a good load on his back too. Meanwhile we had found water in a muddy pond close below the village, not inviting at first sight, but its appearance belied its taste. In the course of the morning, another much larger pond was discovered some 600 yards from the top of the Narik Suk on its eastern slope towards the Chagru valley, containing an ample supply of drinkable water. A picquet was placed on this, in case any stray sharpshooter of the enemy should try to pick off men going there to fetch water, and we were now independent of water mules from below. The native information which led our Intelligence Officers to suppose that the water supply of Dargai was from a place three miles distant, which was alleged as one of the principal reasons for evacuating it on the 18th, was not particularly valuable.*

As our kits and the light baggage which was to be taken on into Tirah had not been sorted from what was to be left behind at Shinawari, we expected to

* It is somewhat singular to find this misconception with regard to the water supply of Dargai confirmed in the despatch. Paragraph eight ends with the following sentences:—"The track to the water was afterwards found to be about three miles in length, so commanded from the adjacent heights that water could not have been obtained in the presence of an enemy, unless these heights as well as Dargai itself, had been held."

return there and join our own Division. But orders were sent up to the Narik Suk that the Battalion was to remain there until it was relieved. An urgent message was accordingly helioed down to camp for great-coats and blankets to be sent up. Our Quarter-Master, Captain Riddell, and Transport Officer, Lieutenant Keller, worked hard at Shinawari, to send up all we wanted, but so great was the block of transport still on the one narrow road to the Kotal, that despite their utmost efforts the mules were unable to get through till the following morning. So another night had to be spent on the hill without any further covering than the clothes we stood up in. However, there was still a good deal of timber left in the ruins of Dargai, and any quantity in another village not far from the large tank, so that every Company was able to collect an ample supply of fuel to keep big fires burning through the night. Bundles of maize stalks found in the villages also served to lessen the discomfort of sleeping on the bare ground, and altogether it was a far less wretched night than the one preceding. Some thoughtful individual sent up a couple of kegs of rum, which arrived just in time to allow a rum ration to be issued before dark. The commissariat department had laid in a generous stock of rum at Shinawari, but hitherto the doctors had been distressingly chary of sanctioning its issue. To the ordinary lay mind, the benefit of a ration of rum to men about to spend a cold night in the open air on picquet duty seems indisputable.

The night of Oct. 21st again passed without the slightest molestation from the enemy. Next morning, orders were received that the Regiment was to follow the 1st Division on to Khorappa, when they advanced from Shinawari on the following day, the 23rd. In view of this, a party of Officers, Non-commissioned Officers and men, under charge of Major Wylly, was sent back to Shinawari to sort out and pack kits. Even then, on the second day after the

action at Dargai, this party found the road halfway to Shinawari still absolutely blocked with the baggage and stores of the 2nd Division, and learnt that many animals had been standing loaded up for over thirty-six hours. From the Narik Suk troops and transport could be seen pouring over the Kotal in one continuous stream all day, and again threading their way down a stony river bed at the bottom, where the Chagru defile debouched into a more open valley in which Khorappa village lay.

Khorappa had been fixed upon as the first halting place on the north side of the Kotal, but that locality proved to be so commanded on every side by over-hanging heights, that the advance of the 2nd Division was continued another two and a half miles up the Khanki valley to a spot nearly opposite the large fortified village of Khangarbur, where an extensive plateau on the north bank of the river afforded necessary space for the large force assembling. At this camp a halt of a whole week was found necessary to enable the two Divisions to close up, and to furnish them with the supplies required for a further advance. Though the nearest place to it that rejoiced in any name at all was Khangarbur, the post came to be generally known and spoken of as Khorappa, by which name it will hereafter be always described in these pages.

Great-coats and blankets for officers and men having reached the Narik Suk on the 22nd, and each Company having as on the previous day laid in large supplies of beams and logs from the timbers of the villages for bonfires, our last night on that inhospitable peak was passed in comparative comfort.

On the morning of the 23rd, the road from Shinawari was sufficiently clear to enable the first Brigade to make a start for Khorappa, where for the first time we were to join them. The Devons and 1st Gurkhas marched there direct, via the Chagru Kotal. To the remaining regiment of the 1st Brigade,

the 30th Punjab Infantry, was assigned the thankless task of relieving us on the Narik Suk, where that unfortunate regiment spent many unexciting weeks guarding the line of communications, until at last they were ordered up to the front towards the end of November, to relieve the 15th Sikhs. Their advanced party arrived early in the morning, and at nine o'clock the Derbys bade a glad farewell to Dargai and the Narik Suk. We followed a track that led down a long spur running northwards, parallel at first to the Chagru defile, and eventually dropped steeply down into the valley exactly at the junction of the defile with the Narik Darra.

This was the point from which the turning movement to threaten the enemy's left rear at the second attack of Dargai on October 20th, was to have taken place.* Even if it had been possible to push

* Considerable controversy has raged round the subject of the frontal attack at the recapture of Dargai. The veriest second lieutenant raw from Sandhurst knows, of course, that to attack such a position solely with a frontal assault is sheer midsummer madness *if* there is any possibility of turning it. The question is, Was any flank attack possible under the circumstances? Sir William Lockhart's intentions were clear enough. In the despatches he states that, in replying to General Yeatman-Biggs' suggestion of an alternative route the night before the battle, "I remarked that while it would be necessary to clear the Dargai heights, the enemy would probably retire as soon as troops had been pushed on to the point where the Narik Darra joins the Chagru defile, as the enemy's rear would thus be threatened." Plainly the idea was to engage the enemy in front with a portion of the force, while other troops pushed down the defile and threatened their rear *viâ* the Narik Darra, "a combination," says Colonel Hutchinson, "which would almost certainly have expelled them from their position on the heights without such severe loss as a purely frontal attack must inevitably involve." Very likely it would; but how was the Narik Darra to be reached? Speaking of the advance from Shinawari, eleven pages earlier in the same chapter, Colonel Hutchinson writes: "The enemy had skilfully occupied in strength the village of Dargai and the Narik Spur (or Suk), which *forms* the western boundary of the Chagru Valley, and *completely dominates* the road down it, by which we must perforce descend. It was necessary, therefore, to dislodge him from this coign of vantage as a *preliminary* measure." Another

troops through the defile to reach the place, our experience of the descent was not one to inspire any confidence that they would have been able to cause the enemy much alarm. The first part of the track was fairly good going, but during the last mile of the descent it plunged down by steep zig-zags through

writer, "Spectator," gives it as his opinion, in an interesting article contributed to the Indian *Pioneer*, that, "If Sir William Lockhart's intention had been carried out, the enemy would have cleared off the higher ridges and gone to where the valley beyond the Kotal narrows, and from a perpendicular cliff at that place, would have annihilated our force. It was absolutely necesssary for us to hold the Dargai ridges to prevent this. I cannot help thinking that if Sir William Lockhart had been at Chagru Kotal on the 18th he would have seen the narrow valley with precipitous cliffs on each side, and General Westmacott would never have been ordered to evacuate Dargai. I can only presume that the same view of the valley is not visible from Samana Suk as from Chagru Kotal."

To Major-General Yeatman-Biggs, commanding the 2nd Division, was entrusted the task of conducting the advance over the Chagru Kotal into the Khanki valley on the 20th October. He was in supreme command that day. His instructions were to dislodge the enemy from the Dargai heights by a frontal attack, combined with a turning movement to threaten their left rear *vid* the Narrik Darra. During the greater part of September, before the Tirah Field Force was organised he had held the independent command of what was officially described as "The operations on the Samana," which he had conducted with conspicuous success, and which had afforded him ample opportunities of becoming acquainted with the geography of the Samana as far west as the Chagru Kotal. His health, however, had suffered, and he remained up in the purer atmosphere of the Samana at Fort Lockhart until the 18th October, when he came down to Shinawari, where were the brigadiers who occupied Dargai that day, and who were to work under him on the 20th. On the evening of the 19th, seeing the Dargai heights occupied in force by the enemy, he wired up to Sir William Lockhart at Fort Lockhart on the Samana, suggesting that the advance to the Khanki valley should be made by an alternative route, *vid* Fort Gulistan and the Tsalai spur, which would avoid the Chagru defile altogether. This was the way by which Sir William himself marched down from the Samana on the 21st, with No. 9 Mountain Battery, R.A., the Northamptons, 36th Sikhs, and a company of Bombay sappers and miners; and from the village of Tsalai downwards the track proved so bad that the utmost difficulty was experienced in getting the baggage down. It was probably the known difficulties of this descent

huge rocks or high bush, among which constantly no more than a few yards of the path could be seen ahead. Moreover, any bit of the way that was more open could usually be completely commanded from many points higher up the hill. It would have been a frightful piece of ground for troops to attempt to

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which, partly at least, induced Sir William Lockhart still to adhere to his original plan.

General Yeatman-Biggs, therefore, was under the necessity of starting on the 20th to attempt an operation of which his judgment disapproved from the beginning. On arrival at the Kotal all that he saw there tended to confirm his original opinion that the turning movement to threaten the enemy's left rear *vid* the Narik Darra was a sheer impossibility. Any attempt on their right flank was equally out of the question. This could only have been done, as on the 18th, by detaching a separate column to start from Shinawari for the purpose, and, be it remembered, General Kempster's brigade on that occasion, starting at 4 a.m., did not reach Dargai till 3 p.m. General Yeatman-Biggs therefore conceived that he had no alternative but to deliver a direct frontal attack, and with a tenacity of purpose not to be shaken, hurled regiment after regiment at the position, until, after five hours' fighting, it was his.

Sir William's own opinion is given in paragraph twenty-one of the despatches. "The general officer commanding the 2nd Division restricted himself," he says, "to a frontal attack on the Dargai heights, without employing a portion of the large force at his disposal to turn the enemy's rear by pushing on as rapidly as possible to the point of junction of the Narik Darra with the Chagru defile. Undoubtedly the troops would have been under fire, and might have suffered some loss" ("Spectator" calls it "annihilation") "in moving along the road below the heights; but if full advantage had been taken of the inequalities of the ground, I am of opinion that the loss would not have been heavy, and I feel confident that as soon as their line of retreat was threatened, the tribesmen would have begun to disperse."

It is difficult to avoid a belief that if Sir William Lockhart had himself marched down the Chagru defile and seen that narrow gorge, sometimes little wider than the river-bed, winding between cliffs often rising perpendicularly three or four hundred feet each side, he would have seen reason to modify his opinion as to the practicability of sending troops through it to the point of junction with the Narik Darra. Sir William suffered under the serious disadvantage of being in a far from robust state of health at the beginning of the campaign. When the expedition against the Afridis was projected he was on leave in Europe, undergoing one of those cures at a German bath of which the first effect is to induce a condition of listlessness and lethargy. Whilst the cure

ascend with even a few Afridis to oppose them. The descent, with luckily no enemy at hand, was difficult enough. B company was detailed for baggage and rear guard, and had no light task to get the transport down. At this early stage in the campaign the transport was still deplorable. Many even of the

still wanted three weeks of completion, he was suddenly recalled, by telegraphic orders, to India, to take command of the Tirah Field Force, and started forthwith direct from Bad Nauheim to catch the Indian mail at Brindisi on the 3rd September, without returning to England. He arrived at Kohat on the 4th October, when the heat by day is still considerable, and promptly moved up to Fort Lockhart, 6280 feet high, to obtain the benefit of the pure air and bracing climate of the Samana. There he remained, regaining strength and wisely husbanding his energies for the arduous task before him, until the day after the second action of Dargai, which, however, as well as the first, he had watched in the distance from the Samana Suk. The distance from Fort Lockhart to Shinawari, the advanced base where the force concentrated, is some six miles as the crow flies, and twice as long by road, and though the two posts were connected by field telegraph, when it pleased the Orakzais to leave the wire uncut, as well as by visual signalling, it is difficult for the commander-in-chief of a large force to preserve at such a distance that close touch with his subordinate commanders and the troops which is so essential when operations are about to begin, and still more when they have actually opened. Had Sir William Lockhart's health allowed him to be present at Shinawari on the 18th and 19th, or to superintend in person the advance of the 2nd Division into the enemy's country, it is possible that many things might have turned out otherwise. On the 21st he marched down from the Samana, not through the Chagru defile, but *vid* Fort Gulistan and the Tsalai spur—a terribly difficult descent—and for the first time established his headquarters in the midst of the force, to their great satisfaction, at Khangarbur. Thenceforward the advance was continued, not quite so quickly as had been anticipated, but with complete success, without a single hitch, into the heart of Tirah.

Sir William Lockhart is the most experienced frontier soldier we have. A long and successful career, and many dealings with the wild tribesmen inhabiting the mountainous regions that form the North-West boundary of India, entitle his opinion on a detail of mountain warfare to peculiar respect. But General Yeatman-Biggs was also an officer of ripe and varied experience, and in this case he was the *man on the spot*. However carefully a commander may lay his plans, the accidents of warfare may bring about a change of circumstances which render their literal execution inadvisable. On such occasions it is for the man on the spot to

obligatory mules—by which is meant those carrying ammunition, water, and greatcoats—were without saddles, which meant that their loads were simply balanced on the animal's back by their own weight, so that jolting down an extra steep place would constantly send a load pitching over a mule's head; or a projecting rock at some point, where the path becomes more than ordinarily narrow, would catch a heavy bundle of greatcoats and blankets and drag them off sideways. Of course it never occurs to a native "*drabi*" to think of leading his mule aside out of the path on these occasions, and the result is that every one of the long string behind him is halted, as there is no room to pass. As a load dropped off somewhere on an average about once in every five minutes, progress under such conditions was necessarily slow, and it took nearly five hours and a vast expenditure of profanity to accomplish the three and a-half miles from Dargai down into the valley.

When once the valley was gained, the remainder of the march to Khorappa was comparatively plain sailing. After two and a-half or three miles down the Chagru valley, the south bank of the Khanki river was reached, and a couple of miles more brought us at 4.30 p.m. into Khorappa camp, where we found our commissariat stores coming direct from Shinawari had

judge how far he is justified in departing from instructions. That General Yeatman-Biggs did depart from his instructions is abundantly clear. That he was not fully justified in so doing who shall say?

Whether, the heights of Dargai having once being captured and abondoned on the 18th, it was necessary to retake them, and whether, if so, their recapture by a frontal attack only could have been avoided, are questions which will probably remain in dispute. But few, if any, will be found to withhold consent from Sir William Lockhart's final remarks on the action. "I recognise that the enemy's defeat was rendered more complete and decisive by their being encouraged to hold on to the last, and the result of the action must be regarded as satisfactory, inasmuch as the movement of the troops, baggage, and supplies from Shinawari to Khorappa, subsequent to the capture of the Dargai heights, was almost unmolested."

preceded us, with most of our kits and baggage, though the last of the party in charge of them did not arrive till 7.30. About an hour after we had turned in for the night, which was much warmer down here, we were aroused by a somewhat severe outbreak of sniping, which continued intermittently till past midnight, happily without any casualties amongst anybody connected with the Battalion. A small body of the enemy had made a determined attempt to surprise a *sangar* held by a party of the Gordons on the top of a precipitous bluff at the north corner of the camp, looking up the Kandi Mishti river bed towards the Sempagha Pass, and named the Kashmir Battery. Guided by a man who knew the way, and who held in his hand one end of a long line, several men climbed in single file to within a very few feet of the picquet, when they were discovered, and the leaders shot down. Two of their bodies were thrown down the face of the cliff, and remained there unburied among the rocks half-way down for a long time afterwards.

Next day, Sunday, Oct. 24th, was for the Battalion a day of rest and comparative peace. We shifted our quarters on to higher ground, to guard a portion of the circumference of the camp on its north-west side, and set to work building a low wall of loose stones, as at Shinawari, to protect our front. For the first time for four days we enjoyed the luxury of a wash and change of clothing, and gained another immense advantage by the arrival this day of a Brigadier of our own. Hitherto the 1st Brigade had been without one. Colonel Ian Hamilton, C.B., D.S.O., had originally been entrusted with the command of the 1st Brigade, but he had the misfortune to be thrown from his horse and break a leg before the fighting began, and the Brigade was given to Brigadier-General Hart, V.C., C.B., under whom we had the privilege and pleasure of serving for the rest of the campaign.

Khorappa camp was formed on the low hills surrounding a sort of cup. It was commanded at extreme ranges from higher ground, but as we were under the wall raised round the perimeter, or protected by the reverse slopes of the rim of the cup, we could practically defy the sniper and all his efforts, although the night sniping at Khorappa was more severe than at any other camp all through the campaign. The night of the 24th passed undisturbed by any attentions on the part of the enemy.

Monday, Oct. 25th, was an eventful day. The right-half Battalion, under command of Major Taylor, was ordered out on a foraging expedition up the Khanki River. A wing each of the Devons, 1st Gurkhas and 3rd Sikhs, with four guns of the Kohat Mountain Battery, completed the party, which was commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Yule of the Devons. The tribesmen on the hills kept up a dropping fire as the force advanced, doing no injury, and the troops pushed on as far as the village of Ramadan, some four and a-half miles from camp, and occupied it without resistance. Ramadan was perched on the top of the north bank of the river, overlooking at a height of eighty feet or so the broad stony river bed, which varied in width from one hundred yards to a quarter of a mile. The south bank was bounded by steep wooded spurs of the Samana, occasionally cleft by small valleys running down to the river. It was to a large village up one of these, a quarter of a mile below Ramadan, that the transport accompanying the column was taken to be loaded up with grain and fodder. Whilst this was going on, the wing of the Derbys was detailed to hold Ramadan, with orders to remain in occupation of the village, until all the transport had started homewards, and then to follow on acting as rear guard. Meanwhile the enemy were seen collecting in large numbers on the heights a mile or more to the north adjoining the Sempagha Pass, and began to descend upon us long before the transport was ready to return. Soon

the bullets were whizzing into the village, and it was a considerable relief when the last of the mules had come down into the river bed and the main column was in full retreat back to camp. The walls of the village afforded a good deal of protection to us inside it, but at the same time were too high in most places to fire over, so that it was difficult to bring any effective fire to bear upon the enemy, who were advancing closer every minute and working round both flanks. With their usual skill in taking advantage of their knowledge of the ground, they made such excellent use of cover as to leave us nothing but their puffs of smoke, to shew where they were firing. Some difficulty was experienced in loopholing the walls of the village from the inside, and Lance-Corporal Charles Morton and Private Henry Lupton, both of C Company, volunteered to go outside under fire, and work at the loopholes from the front. The convoy being at last sufficiently far away, Major Taylor ordered the wing of the Regiment to evacuate Ramadan, retiring by successive Companies from the left. B Company was on the right, and was therefore the last to quit the village, having been firing with fixed sights for some time before they did so. These were occasions on which the excellent instructions of the drill book, to the effect that "a retirement should usually be performed in quick time," and that "the move from cover to cover must be made in an upright position," were not particularly suitable. In fact for this class of warfare a slight experience of big game stalking is of far greater value, than the most intimate acquaintance with "Infantry Drill." The Afridis, whose favourite diversion appears to be stalking their neighbours, had nothing to learn from us as to the methods of conducting a fight in such country as theirs.

The last section of B Company, under Lance-Sergeant Lovatt, had scarcely got 200 yards clear of the village, and was retiring along the steep broken

bank of the river at a rate considerably faster than the regulation pace for retirements, when a man of another Company shouted up from the river bed for help to bring along a wounded comrade. There was nothing for it but to advance the section again towards Ramadan, whilst two or three men went down to carry the wounded man along. After this had been done that section put in one of the smartest bits of doubling they could remember, till the rest of the rear-guard was overtaken.

It had developed into a very nasty little rear-guard action. The enemy had crossed the river higher up to work through the woods on our right as we retired; on the left they were threatening our line of retreat to camp in considerable numbers, and they had occupied Ramadan with incredible rapidity in our rear almost immediately we had vacated it. Here, however, a few well-placed shells from the mountain battery offered a most timely and valuable assistance, and prevented the occupants of the village from giving us much trouble. It was at this period that one of the mountain guns burst at the trunnion, a misfortune happily unique in the campaign.

The retirement was steadily conducted in excellent order, the troops falling back upon successive positions, greatly assisted by the battery. A Company of the Derbys was extended across the river bed, and retired by alternate sections, firing at the enemy with as much regularity as if they were on parade. Most of the other troops retired along the north bank, over very rough ground much cut up by nullahs, in which regular formations were impossible to preserve. The sound of continuous heavy firing having reached camp, strong reinforcements with another battery were hastily sent out, and the enemy were then driven off for a time.

Our casualties were six men wounded, one, Private Eyre of A Company, mortally. There were also

wounded three men of the Devons, two Gurkhas, and a gunner.

The day's fighting, however, was very far from being finished yet. Hardly had the foraging party returned to their quarters, when the enemy, who had followed them close up to camp, without waiting for darkness to come on, opened a hot fire upon the camp. The 19th, P.W.O. Yorkshire Regiment, had just marched in from Shinawari, and some of their Companies had squatted in the most confiding way on an exposed slope to the left of our bivouacks, where they were to continue the line of defence, when they were rudely aroused to a lively sense of the need for more caution by a shower of bullets amongst them, by which six casualties were caused. It was their first experience of being under fire. The firing into camp that evening amounted to something more than the ordinary sniping. The sniper sneaks quietly and stealthily to some commanding piece of cover near the camp, and gives no notice of his presence beyond the report of his gun. That night they came on with hoarse shouts and loud banging of tom-toms, and on two distinct occasions, seemed to be working themselves up for a regular attempt to rush the camp. One man, evidently an old Sepoy, was vigorously playing a regimental fife, apparently at no great distance in front of us. The night was pitch dark, and nothing could be seen beyond the low wall along our front, but on these occasions we held our fire until from the sound the enemy appeared to be getting close, and then let loose a torrent of "independent" at them. The Gurkhas up on the Kashmir battery on our right, and the Yorkshires on the left, were doing the same thing. Warned by the sounds of heavy firing along this north side of camp, a battery from the rear fired a few rounds of star shell, which for a few seconds lit up all the ground in front of us very distinctly. One of these shells shewed some of the enemy within fifty yards of our wall, and another

revealed an opposite slope thickly studded with dark figures scuttling back out of the glare of the momentarily brilliant light.

It was ten o'clock before the enemy ceased from troubling, and many of us by then had been under fire for eleven hours. The casualties of the evening were twenty-four among the 1st and ten among the 2nd Division. Two staff-officers were hit whilst at dinner, one losing an arm in consequence, and twice bullets whizzed into some grain bags which had only just been piled round Sir William Lockhart's tent. Another shot smashed General Symon's lamp. The Battalion was fortunate in escaping with but two casualties, and one of these occurred in a field-hospital far from our picquets. Lance-Corporal Orton, of A Company, had been admitted into it in the morning, and whilst lying there was hit by a sniper's bullet in the stomach, dying of the wound next day.

In this day's orders was published one of those gracious messages from the Queen which do so much to gladden the hearts of Her Majesty's soldiers fighting her battles on distant Frontiers, and, if possible, to intensify the feeling of personal loyalty and devotion to their Sovereign.

"Please express my congratulations to all ranks, British and Native troops, on their gallant conduct in action on the 18th and 20th. Deeply deplore the loss of many precious lives among officers and men of my army. Pray report condition of wounded and assure them of my true sympathy."

The expenditure of ammunition in repelling the enemy on the night of Oct. 25th, appeared to have aroused much searching of heart amongst the authorities, and strict returns were called for to shew the number of rounds fired by each Company. Had they been in the position of Company commanders picqueting the walls in the firing line, the somewhat severe strictures passed might possibly have been modified. Apparently you may leave your ammunition on the road or you may hand it over—in boxes—

to the enemy, but you must never fire it. This is wasteful!

Much more to the point were the measures taken, after the lessons of the 25th, to checkmate the efforts of the sniper by placing picquets out at night on prominent heights commanding the camp, which had hitherto formed his favourite stalking-grounds. The ordinary outpost system described with such beautiful accuracy in twenty-eight pages of our drill book, with all its paraphernalia of "sentries 100 to 400 yards in front of the picquets," patrols "pushed well to the front along all roads and tracks," supports and reserves and all the rest of it, admirably adapted as no doubt it is for European warfare, in which we are rarely engaged, is, like most of the teaching of that estimable work, eminently unsuitable in campaigns against savages, from which we are seldom free. In fact, the first thing the British soldier has to do when he goes on active service, is as a rule, to renounce the drill-book, like the devil and all his works, and start to learn his trade afresh. "At night," says the drill-book, "an enemy's advance, except in very open ground, must be confined to roads and tracks." Tirah was emphatically not an open country. Its roads were none and its tracks but scanty, and yet the Afridi set the maxims of the drill-book at naught, and managed to advance by night to some purpose. It being impossible for obvious reasons to secure the repose of the troops in rear by outposts, as commonly described and practised, the sniper was simply endured for a long time, and no steps taken to cure the evil until after the night of Oct. 25th, when it had become intolerable, and some preventive measures were imperative. From this date, the system was adopted of picqueting the hills surrounding camps with strong detachments usually consisting of a Company, protected by *sangars*, when no natural cover was available; and though sniping at night was not entirely put an end to, it was materially diminished, and no camp suffered again so

severely as Khorappa on the night of the 25th. Nor was there any single instance throughout the campaign of one of these picquets being rushed or even incurring any severe losses. The Gurkha scouts, who did such inestimable service on numerous occasions, also contributed largely to the discomfiture of the sniper. They went out in small parties at night, and out-Heroded Herod by stalking the stalker. The "game-book," in which a record was kept of the daily or nightly bag made of these prowling vermin, shewed a greater number than were accounted for in probably any one engagement during the expedition.

October 26th was a perfectly peaceful day, and was succeeded by an equally peaceful night. On the 27th, E, F, and G Companies formed part of a foraging party to the east, commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Dowse, which returned without having encountered any opposition fortunately, but also without any forage, the villages they visited having been drawn blank. By this time the whole of the two Divisions were practically concentrated at Khorappa, and consequently orders were issued for the advance towards the Sempagha pass the following morning. The week's halt at Khorappa had been found to be absolutely necessary, to give time for all the columns to be closed up and provided with the supplies required for a fresh advance, chiefly on account of the difficulties of the road across the Chagru Kotal, and the inferiority of a great deal of the transport. However, by Oct. 27th, the road had been so far improved by the unceasing labour of the Sappers and Miners, that a convoy of 3000 camels was able to come in from Shinawari, and when once the camel with his load of 400lbs. is able to travel, the question of supplies becomes comparatively easy. That it was no light one is evidenced by the fact that the force assembled at Khorappa amounted to 6800 British ranks, 10,200 native ranks, with 17,000 followers and upwards of 25,000 animals. The requirements of this multitude

in the way of food alone—and they had other needs—amounted to over 700 tons of stuff per day, at a moderate estimate.*

* Hutchinson's "Campaign in Tirah," page 78.

CHAPTER VI.

ACROSS THE SEMPAGHA TO ORAKZAI TIRAH.

DURING the week's halt at Khorappa the Sempagha Pass had been clearly visible in the distance, a slight dip in the curtain of hills that screened from the outer world the hallowed precints of unexplored Tirah. The pass from a distance looked anything but formidable, but nobody knew what difficulties it might not be found to present, and here if anywhere, on the very threshold of their most cherished valleys, which it was their pride to claim no strange or hostile foot had ever trod,—here all thought the tribesmen would strike the hardest blow.

The distance to the foot of the Sempagha Pass was scarcely five miles. It could be reached either by descending at once from Khorappa into the deep broad bed of the Kandi Mishti river, which joined the Khanki river just below Khorappa, and marching up the river bed which led directly on to the pass, or by taking the route across a gently rising plain to the village of Ghandaki. Ghandaki was a short four miles from Khorappa, and the whole force moved out there on the 28th October, in order to be ready for an early assault on the Sempagha the following morning, and also to give opportunity to Sir William Lockhart and his staff to inspect the approaches to the pass from closer quarters, and decide on the plan of attack. Three days' reserve rations were issued to all troops the previous evening. The advance to Ghandaki was unmolested, hills on both sides of the route having been occupied beforehand. On arrival at Ghandaki the Regiment was sent on with the 2nd Battalion 1st

Gurkhas to cross the Kandi Mishti nullah, and occupy some low hills from which an excellent view of the Sempagha Pass could be obtained across the intervening bed of the Sempagha ravine, whilst various General and Staff Officers reconnoitred the pass and formed plans for the morrow.

Just before starting on this reconnaissance the Regiment was greatly cheered by the most welcome arrival of Major Smith-Dorrien, who, whilst on leave at home had scented fighting and flown out, with Lieutenant Maurice, to rejoin us. These Brown Hills, as they were named, were selected for the first artillery position in the attack that was to be made on the following day. No serious opposition was offered to the reconnaissance, but the enemy kept us amused with a considerable number of long range shots, and flaunted gay banners in different places on the opposite slopes of the Sempagha. The village of Nazeno on our right front appeared to be particularly strongly held. Whilst we were advancing, Colonel Sage of the Gurkhas was severely wounded, and after we had fallen back across the deep nullah towards Ghandaki, and had placed a line of picquets to cover the camp for the night, the enemy waxed bolder and kept up a fairly heavy fire, so that the work of making sangars for the protection of the picquets was not altogether unattended with risk. In addition to delaying the work very considerably, the enemy succeeded in wounding a man of G Company, Private Wood, and later on two or three men of other corps in the camp behind the picquets.

At sundown the Devon Regiment was sent to relieve our picquets. B, G, and E Companies returned to camp at once, but owing to a mistake the unfortunate F Company, which under Captain Marshall was on a hill to the left, did not get relieved till late in the night.

Orders were issued for the First Brigade to start at five a.m. the next morning—two hours before day-

light—and prepare the way for the main attack by the other three brigades. The Derbys were to seize, at the point of the bayonet if necessary, and hold the low range of the Brown Hills, from which the artillery would be able to effectually shell the lower slopes of the Sempagha. The Devons were to advance upon and occupy the village of Nazeno, in order to secure the right flank of the main advance, whilst the 2nd Battalion 1st Gurkhas were to demonstrate against the large village of Kandi Mishti, with the view of similarly protecting the left flank. The remaining regiment of the Brigade, the 30th Punjab Infantry, had been left behind, cursing their luck, in occupation of Dargai.

These dispositions were carried out next morning with entire success. The 1st Brigade moved out of camp at five a.m., and the rapid occupation, with but slight opposition, by the Devons and Gurkhas of the villages of Nazeno and Kandi Mishti, completely ensured both flanks from attack during the whole subsequent advance of the main column. The Derbys were the first corps to leave camp at the head of the brigade, to seize the Brown Hills, half the battalion being in front with the other half echeloned to the left rear in support. In perfect silence the right half battalion, led by Major Smith-Dorrien, dropped down into the deep Kandi Mishti ravine, and formed under the opposite bank, magazines being charged.

Then in file the ascent began, and on the crest being reached the half battalion formed in two lines of two companies each, the one fifty yards behind the other. The enemy's watch fires were still alight here and there, one being visible in a sangar 300 yards off, and fun was expected. It was pitch dark.

As we lay on the ground the order was given to fix bayonets and advance in silence on the sangars. In two perfect lines the half battalion stole onwards through the darkness, but before many yards were covered it became evident that the enemy was on the

qui vive, as the fire in the nearest sangar was suddenly put out. When the sangar was reached one man only with a standard was seen to be still in it, and he apparently remembered that he had a pressing engagement elsewhere, and vanished in so great a hurry that he left ten rounds of Lee-Metford ammunition behind him. The empty sangar was rushed without a sound, except an encouraging whisper from Private Honey, of A Company, to tell the wing commander who was leading that he was close behind. Part of D Company was told off to hold the sangar, and the remainder of the line swept on 600 yards further, to seize another line of heights, which also proved to be untenanted. The enemy had completely evaporated down into the Sempagha ravine below, without the smallest effort to dispute the capture of the Brown Hills. This was all the more disappointing as, from the number of camp fires, it had been evident that the hills had been held all night by the enemy in considerable strength, and the authorities had fully expected that the part allotted to us in the early morning would have entailed very heavy fighting.

However, the artillery position had been secured without firing a shot, and the work of the Regiment was finished for the day, half an hour before daybreak. Still, though compelled to be merely spectators for the rest of the day, it could hardly be said that, "the subsequent proceedings interested us no more." We enjoyed at least the satisfaction of being in an ideal position for watching the whole of a most interesting battle. We could see the last night's camp at Ghandaki immediately behind us. Kandi Mishti was visible on our left, and we could watch the Devons on the opposite side of the Sempagha ravine driving the enemy through and beyond Nazeno on our right, whilst the entire ascent of the Sempagha Pass from foot to crest was in full view before us.

When day broke the artillery of both Divisions, six batteries in all, followed us up on to the Brown

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Hills. Behind them the other three brigades, composing the main column, led by General Gaselee's Brigade, the 2nd, marched along the Sempagha ravine round our right to the foot of the pass. Sir William Lockhart, clad in a long brown ulster, rode up on a sturdy cob to watch the artillery open the action from the Brown Hills. With him were a number of officers of the Headquarter Staff, followed by sundry survey officers, newspaper correspondents, and other miscellaneous folk. An officer of the Regiment, whose company was posted close to the spot where they all halted, curious to know who everybody was, went up to a native who had ridden up with them, and who was sitting on a rock, wrapped in a soldier's Gathri coat, and rather shrivelled up with the cold. The officer in question imagined him to be probably a confidential baboo attached to the Headquarter Office, and plied him with questions, until, seeing he appeared to possess very little information about the *personnel* of the staff, he inquired somewhat testily, "Well, what are you then?" "I'm Pertab Singh," he replied!

The engagement began in earnest about 7.30 a.m. by the three batteries of the 1st Division opening a brisk fire upon some strong sangars, commanding the lower slopes of the Sempagha, from which the enemy had already been firing for some time in a somewhat desultory fashion upon the advanced troops of the 2nd Brigade. From our position close beside the guns every shot could be clearly seen. The exact range, 1850 yards, was soon found, and the sangars were on very much the same level as the batteries, if anything a little lower. Yet, though shot after shot burst with beautiful precision on and around the sangars, it seemed very doubtful whether any actual damage was being done. As at Dargai, they appeared proof against the most skilfully directed efforts of the light mountain batteries. At any rate, the defenders, who must have numbered fully a hundred (as they were obliged to shew themselves crossing open ground

when they eventually bolted, their numbers could be estimated fairly accurately), stuck manfully to their posts for a good twenty minutes, under an incessant shower of shot and shell. It was practically the one point in the attack of the Sempagha where the enemy offered any considerable resistance. And when at last they did quit these sangars, it was probably the rifle fire brought to bear upon them by the Devons, who had worked up past Nazeno almost in rear of their left flank, that as much as anything else compelled them to go. The countless number of bullet and shell marks revealed by a subsequent inspection of the face of these sangars proved too, to how close and accurate a fire they had been subjected. Still more surprising, to an infantry officer at least, was the slight effect the guns appeared to produce upon the enemy even when in the open. They quitted the sangar in small driblets certainly, and never offered a large target, but time after time a shell would seemingly burst right in the middle of a small scattered group scurrying away under cover, with no further result than to make them scatter more widely and hasten their footsteps. Only very rarely was a man seen to drop. A couple of dead bodies only were found afterwards close by one sangar, and others no doubt got away wounded.

Nevertheless, if the artillery were not responsible for many casualties among the enemy, there can be no question but that their services this day were of inestimable value, and that, insignificant on the whole as was the resistance offered by the enemy, our losses must have been far heavier had not the artillery been able so effectually to prepare the way for the infantry attack.

As the enemy were seen to be vacating their lower sangars, Brigadier General Spragge, commanding the artillery, sent on the three batteries of the 2nd Division, which from want of room on the Brown Hills, as well as of any objective, had so far not been

engaged, to occupy the Second Artillery position on a projecting hill on the lower slopes of the Sempagha, and from there to cover, at a range of 2200 yards, the attack of the 2nd Brigade upon the crest of the Pass.

From our position on the Brown Hills, these batteries could be seen coming into action, and the leading troops of the main column, under cover of their fire, were plainly visible swarming up various spurs towards the crest; but the distances had become too great to allow us to follow the details of the fight with much understanding. The resistance, however, was but feeble, and at 9.45 a.m. the Queens had gained the crest of the pass. The enemy still retained the heights above it on each side, and another hour and a-half elapsed before they had been finally driven off in full flight down into the Mastura valley, leaving Sir William Lockhart in complete mastery of the Sempagha. Soon after eleven a.m. the heliograph was at work flashing down the news of the victory, for transmission by the same means to Khorappa, there to be telegraphed to the Commander-in-Chief and the Viceroy, and no doubt the streets of London that same evening were vocal with the shouts of newsboys selling "spesherls" announcing that the dreaded Sempagha was won.

One item the helio. sent us from the top of the pass—the first message in fact that did come down, the second being the news of the death of Captain de Butts, R.A.—was to the following effect. "Enemy's loss enormous, ours insignificant." Had the first half of this message been correct, the enemy could hardly have succeeded, as they did, in carrying off all their dead and wounded except in one instance. The fact is that any estimate, either of the numbers engaged or of their casualties, in this as in most other actions, must necessarily be purely conjectural, and there was no special reason to suppose that their losses on the Sempagha were heavy. Those on our side were indisputably slight, especially in proportion to

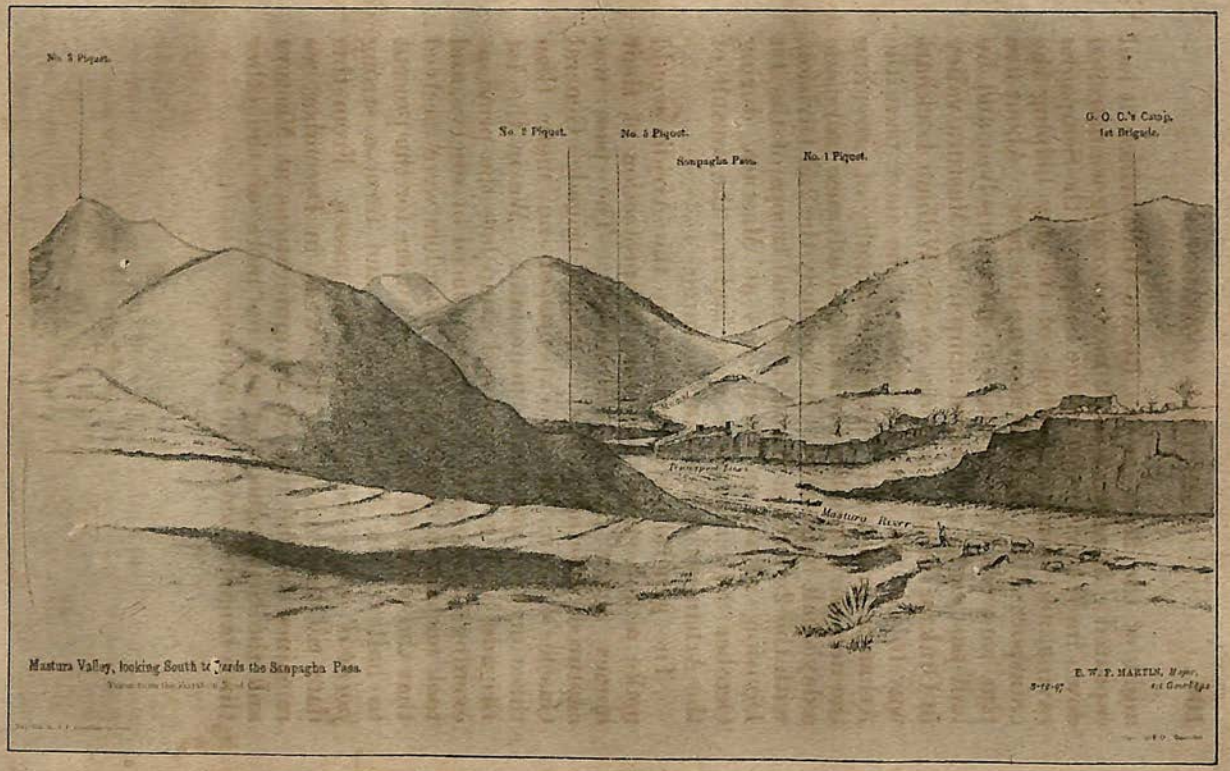
the strength of the position and the importance of the success attained. The total casualties did not exceed twenty-four, including one officer and three men killed, and one officer wounded.* This no doubt was due in part to skilled generalship and the admirable handling of the troops, particularly of the artillery. But in truth the enemy made a very poor display, quite unworthy of their previous efforts at Dargai. Moreover, for reasons unknown, the Afridis, with the exception of the Kuki Khels, left the defence of the Sempagha entirely to the Orakzai. Sir William Lockhart attributed the absence of a more formidable resistance here, as at the Arhanga Pass, to the lesson taught the tribesmen at Dargai, where they learnt that their strongest positions could avail them nothing against the valour of British and native troops.

As soon as the pass was gained, the troops of the three brigades of the main column were pushed on down into the Mastura valley beyond, the 1st Brigade being detailed to hold the Sempagha and assist the passage of the transport. Then began the prodigious task of passing some 20,000 animals, in single file, up the very steep and long mountain path over the pass. This involved an ascent of over 3000 feet over a rugged track some three miles long, not yet converted by the labours of the Pioneer Regiments into a tolerable road. Once the crest was gained, the descent of little over 1000 feet into the Mastura valley was comparatively easy. But it was not until the 31st October—forty hours of actual marching in daylight—that the tail of the transport reached the camp at Mastura. The Regiment bivouacked on the

* Some doubt appears to exist as to the exact numbers. The Queens lost one man killed and seven wounded, in addition to their C.O. Major Handford-Flood, wounded; and six or seven other men in the 2nd Brigade were wounded. Colonel Hutchinson states that the 36th Sikhs had two men killed as well as two men wounded. The despatches, with characteristic inaccuracy, after giving the names of the two casualties among officers, state, "other ranks—killed, one; wounded, three."

night of the 29th on the Brown Hills which it had captured. At seven o'clock next morning we marched down into the river bed at the bottom of the Sempagha ravine, and spent the whole of the day helping the transport of the 2nd Division up the pass. About five p.m. we were able to make a start ourselves, and by half-past eight were all in camp in the Mastura valley in Orakzai Tirah. Anxious as Sir William Lockhart was to lose no time in crossing the next pass, the Arhanga, into Afridi Tirah, the difficulty of providing the necessary supplies for a further advance had made a day's halt imperative. Accordingly the 2nd Division, with the 2nd Brigade and divisional troops of the 1st Division, rested on their oars at Mastura during October 30th, and plans were laid for the assault of the Arhanga the following morning.

The general expectation that the Afridis would make a last stand here for the protection of their homes again proved unfounded. The pass was captured practically by a single brigade, General Gaselee's again, at an expense of no more than three or four casualties, none fatal. We in the 1st Brigade, having only reached camp late the previous evening, had to suffer by being placed in reserve, and took no part in the day's fight. Orders were received that the whole of the 1st Brigade were for the present to halt in the Mastura valley, and form a strong *point d' appui* between the two passes. From this date till the end of the first week in December, we remained on the line of communications at Mastura and the Sempagha, and saw no more of the other three brigades across the Arhanga.



Mastura Valley, looking South towards the Scapagha Pass.

E. W. P. MARTIN, *Major*, *1st Gurkhas*.

[*To face page 106.*

CHAPTER VII.

IN THE MASTURA VALLEY.

In his proclamation addressed to the tribesmen before the beginning of the campaign, Sir William Lockhart had announced that the British Government had determined, in order to mark the fact that they had power to advance if and when they chose, upon despatching a force under his command to march through the country of the Orakzai and the Afridis, and to announce from the heart of their country the final terms of the Government. The first purpose of the expedition had now been accomplished. Sir William Lockhart had successfully lifted the "purdah" of Tirah, and in spite of the prodigious difficulties presented by the nature of the country, had planted two whole Divisions in the heart of the promised land. All that now remained to be done, so it was fondly imagined, was to announce to the tribes the terms of the Government, and receive their complete and speedy submission. Sir William was credited with having assigned ten days as the limit of time for the fulfilment of the expedition from the first start, and with having taken a return passage to England in November. Nor had it occurred to anyone who went up to the front in September, to doubt that they would be back in good time to eat their Christmas dinner in India. All previous experience of expeditions against tribesmen had pointed to a belief that, once the Afridis saw their homes in actual occupation of the forces of Government, they would see the expediency of a prompt surrender, lest a worse thing

befall them. Their utter impotence to stay the tide of invasion, proved by the events of the last few days, would surely, it was thought, remove any lingering hopes of further resistance.

How greatly out of reckoning all such calculations were, very soon became apparent. It was one thing to advance into the heart of the country, but quite another, when there, to enforce terms, or even to make them known. Conditions of peace cannot very well be announced when none of the adversaries will come to listen to them, and the political officers found that for a long time they were powerless to persuade the jirgahs to come in, charm they never so wisely. It was not till the 12th November that sufficiently representative jirgahs of the Orakzai were assembled to be worth treating with, and the Force had been three weeks in Tirah before terms could be announced to the Afridis. Even then, on the 21st November, the two most important of the Afridi Clans, the Zakka and Kuki Khels, still refused to send in their jirgahs and remained stubbornly defiant.

After Tirah was gained and occupied, for the first few days most of us imagined that the expedition was practically over, and there was considerable talk of the breaking up of the Force and immediate return to India of some part of it. As the time wore on and days lengthened into weeks, all ideas of this sort were gradually dissipated. Indeed at one period the probability was seriously discussed of the Force settling down into winter quarters in Tirah. From a military point of view this would perhaps have been preferable to the alternative eventually adopted of withdrawing, or as the Afridis must have regarded it, being hounded out of the country, leaving them still unsubdued and practically masters of the situation. But the military aspect had perforce to give way to political considerations. The expense of maintaining so vast a force in the field at so great a distance from their base was sufficient of itself to compel the Indian Government,

whose resources had already been taxed to the uttermost by the famine of the previous year, to dismiss any intention of prolonging a costly war one day further than was absolutely necessary. The problem that the Commander-in-Chief was called upon to solve might have been much simplified, had the Government made it clear from the outset that anything like a permanent occupation or annexation of the country was out of the question. On November 26th, the *Times* Correspondent, Colonel Hutchinson, who was presumably in close touch with the Headquarter Staff, wrote from Bagh:—"Our halts and our marches are dictated not so much by the military exigencies of the situation, as by political considerations which are weighed and discussed and acted on by the powers that be in Simla and at the India Office. It is for them to order, for us to obey; and it is to be presumed that the long halt at Maidan was arranged partly to allow Government to make up its mind as to what terms should be exacted and what policy pursued, and partly in the vain hope that, seeing us in possession, the Afridis would throw up the sponge and come in. *We know now* that anything like annexation is not, and probably never was contemplated, and we also know now that to wait for our friends the Zakka Khels to climb down was a mistaken and costly experiment."

Three weeks earlier he had telegraphed from Maidan:—"Now that Tirah has been reached, the military situation begins to give place to political considerations, and the future frontier policy of India *has to be* determined. . . . The policy which in view of these considerations appears to command most support is that of permanent occupation. . . . Tirah is well suited for a summer cantonment." And again on the following day, Nov. 6th, he wired, "The question of the permanent occupation of the country is much discussed in camp, but there is *no sign at present of the intentions of the Government.*

Having regard to the past history of our relations with the frontier tribes, it seems certain that a lasting peace is impossible unless we annex and occupy the country and completely disarm the inhabitants."

Such were the views that prevailed generally among soldiers at the front. To the uninitiated it seems passing strange that the Government should have embarked on a war of this scale without any definite view of the policy they meant to adopt at the end of it. Sir William Lockhart, it is true, was vested with supreme political as well as military control of the expedition, but in these days, when Generals in the field are tied by the telegraph to their Governments, such independence is little more than nominal. Apparently events were left to shape themselves according to circumstances, and work out their own salvation. Such an eventuality as continued resistance and open defiance on the part of the Afridis, after their country had been occupied, had probably never entered into the calculations of Government, and when it came, all these weeks of waiting, which did so much to impart to the expedition an air of indecision and failure, and bring down upon its leaders a quantity of ignorant criticism, were the natural result.

Meanwhile the troops at Maidan and Mastura settled down into their respective camps, and proceeded to take such measures as the circumstances allowed to make themselves comfortable and secure from attack. Not that they suffered from lack of occupation or excitement. In order to further convince the enemy of his power to march troops wherever he chose, to chastise offending clans, or to complete surveys of the country, Sir William Lockhart arranged for a series of minor expeditions in various directions from the Headquarters of the Force at Maidan. In addition to these, foraging parties went out almost daily under strong escorts to visit villages in the neighbourhood of the camps, and collect stores

of the fodder so much needed for the army of transport animals, as well as of grain of various sorts, with occasionally such small luxuries as a sack of walnuts, bags of a sort of haricot bean, or a chatty full of honey. The troops engaged in these amusements invariably fulfilled the objects for which they were sent out, and until they turned their steps homewards seldom encountered any serious opposition; but the moment of their withdrawal was the instant signal for the enemy to appear and worry their rear all the way back to camp. Sometimes these retirements were attended with results that might almost be termed disastrous, as on the 9th and 16th November, when the Northamptons and Dorsets respectively suffered such severe losses in the retreat from Saran Sar and Tseri Kandao.

The 1st Brigade at Mastura happily enjoyed complete immunity from any such serious reverses as these. The foraging parties that went out almost daily, seldom returned without receiving a fair share of the enemy's attentions, but the losses they incurred were insignificant, and on the whole the Orakzai, who were our most immediate neighbours, proved themselves far less determined opponents than the Afridis on the other side of the Arhanga pass. The luxury of sniping us at night, however, was one they could not altogether make up their minds to forego, and it was accordingly essential that every possible step should be taken to provide against casualties from this source. As the nights were rapidly becoming colder and the Force was without tents, protection from cold as well as from the sniper was urgently needed, and the companies being disposed in permanent picquets all around the camp, each improvised for itself such shelters as their own ingenuity could devise, and the material at hand available would allow.

To those interested in the subject of field fortification the camp at Mastura, therefore, afforded

admirable illustrations of the various methods employed by troops in Tirah, to strengthen, protect, and shelter their picquets. The camp covered so large an area, consisting of irregular ground much broken up by broad nullahs and water-courses, which here joined the main branch of the Mastura river, that anything like a continuous line of defence all round it was impossible. Consequently it was guarded by a string of company picquets posted at intervals round the circumference, in commanding positions carefully selected by General Hart in consultation with officers commanding corps, and strongly defended. Outlying picquets, furnished by companies of different corps in rotation, were also established at night on the top of a couple of hills, about a mile distant from camp on the east and west sides respectively, with a view of checking the efforts of the sniper. The portion of the camp allotted to the four companies of the Derbys, who were left behind when the Headquarters of the Battalion moved up to the Sempagha, was on the south-east side. E Company, Captain Bowman, was on the left, posted on dry ground in the middle of the broad stony bed of the Mastura river. This being close to the river level, was the coldest of all the picquets. It was defended by sangars formed of the boulders great and small from the river bed, and commanded the main approaches up the valley from the east. Next to it, echeloned on its right rear, came G Company, Captain Bosanquet, posted close in front of a large house, and some 200 yards further on, B Company, Captain Slessor. Both these were on the edge of a high cultivated terrace, with a perpendicular drop of from twelve to fifteen feet immediately in front of them, and also faced nearly due east. They were defended by earthen parapets, crowned with beams to give head cover. A Company, Captain Menzies, was posted as a sort of support to the other three, some way back towards the centre of the camp. Very effective shelters were

constructed for the men to sleep in, immediately behind the posts at sangar or parapet which they were to occupy in case of an attack. These were supported by poles and covered in with matting, both taken from the houses which abounded in and around the valley. Nearly every house contained a certain amount of the matting of the country, made of plaited dwarf-palm leaves, and foraging parties always made a point of bringing home as much of it as they could find. So snug and secure were most of the men in their shelters, that when the tents arrived later from Shinawari, very few of them were thought worth pitching. B Company, however, pitched theirs and built a 6-ft. wall all round the front of them, for which ample material was forthcoming from a house close by. A mud wall battered down with the aid of a heavy beam broke into large sun-baked clods, instead of crumbling to pieces, and these were easily rolled to the spot and built up into an exceedingly substantial bullet-proof wall. In order to give a line of direction for rifle fire in the dark in case of a night attack, the device was in some instances adopted of fastening rods on the crest of a parapet, aligned on tracks leading towards camp.

The design for an officers' mess invented and executed by our mess president, Major Smith-Dorrien, is well worth recording. Where no mess tent, tables or chairs, and very few lamps for night use are available, nothing could be more simple or effective. A circular trench was dug about two feet deep and one and a-half wide, with an inside diameter of some fifteen feet. The earth from the trench was stacked round on the outer side of it, with a berm left of fifteen inches or so. This provided accommodation for twenty officers to take their meals in, sitting on the berm, with their legs in the trench and plates on the ground in front of them across the trench, whilst the excavated earth formed a support for their backs

when they leant back. At night a large bonfire kindled in the centre gave light to see to eat by, as well as the warmth which was so much needed on those bitter nights at Mastura. Further protection from cold was afforded by a screen of matting carried right round the outside, with an opening left for an entrance.

Mastura was the first post at which earthwork defences were employed, or indeed where anything in the way of digging could be attempted. At any previous camp that had been occupied long enough to be put into a state of defence, the sangar of the country had been the only description of field fortification used, a sangar being nothing more or less than a strip of loose stone wall, or sometimes merely a few loose stones placed to give head cover on the top of a natural bank. Except in the lower parts of the cultivated valleys, the country was rough and stony, with rock frequently projecting above ground, which put shelter-trenches out of the question; whilst on the other hand it was usually strewn thickly with large stones and boulders, which could be quickly collected and built up into sangars. But a still more excellent reason for not digging shelter-trenches was to be found in the fact that we had nothing to dig them with. It is devoutly to be hoped that regiments engaged in future expeditions in similar country will be provided with less utterly inefficient entrenching equipment than is at present authorised by the Indian Army Regulations. In India the soldier is mercifully not burdened with those futile portable implements, of which 422 sets per battalion are required by the home regulations to be carried by the men. But the light entrenching tools ordered by the I.A.R. to be issued to infantry regiments on mobilization, and taken on field service, are scarcely less useless. In easy soil six men might perhaps get through as much work with them as a couple of men using ordinary full-sized tools, but they have neither sufficient weight nor

strength to be of the slightest use on rough stony ground, and the stooping which their short handles necessitate makes working with them in any case extremely laborious. The authorised scale for their issue, to both British and Native Infantry, per battalion, is as follows:—

Bars, iron, crow, 5ft. 6in.	2
Ditto, 4ft. 6in.	2
Hammers, sledge, 10lbs.	2
Hooks, bill, handled	40
Picks, light, helved, N.P., 2¾lbs.	90
Shovels, light, helved, cast steel	90

The scale was not strictly adhered to. Of bars, iron, crow—to use the extraordinary jargon of the lists—we took but two, and very useful they were, for demolitions, digging out rocks, making holes in the ground for the supports of shelters, and a variety of other purposes. Hammers, sledge, we neither had nor wanted. The forty bill-hooks would have been very useful if they had been made of good steel, and not apparently of sheet iron. We had eighty light picks, with eight spare helves, and sixty light shovels also, with eight spare helves. The very first day these were used, for clearing the camping ground at Shinawari, which it must be admitted was certainly a tough job, *the whole of the helves, both pick and shovel, were broken.* Others could not be got from the Camp Ordnance Dépôt, and the Pioneers had to set to work extemporising helves from bush and branches. In so doing, they took off the edges and broke the handles of the greater part of the bill-hooks; and, be it remembered, these men, unlike the ordinary rank and file, who do not always handle tools in a particularly lady-like fashion, are more or less skilled artificers, trained to the use of their implements. We had to make shift with these damaged articles, as best we could, until we arrived at Mastura—fortunately there was not much further occasion for digging before that—and there managed to secure from the Engineer

Department forty sets of full-sized picks and shovels, which we kept throughout the rest of the campaign, and which were of the utmost possible service. A fresh supply of the light entrenching tools was obtained from Peshawar, when the regiment reached the Khyber towards the end of the campaign, but they, like the former issue, were only made to look at, and became unserviceable with a very little mild usage.

The futility of issuing these light tools for use on field service becomes still more apparent, when it is borne in mind that the amount of transport allowed for their conveyance is sufficient to carry a very fair supply of the really serviceable full-sized tools kept for use in cantonments. Ten sets of these, including the pair of crates in which they are packed for mule transport, weigh no more than 178lbs., an easy load for a mule. For carrying the whole of the implements taken into the field, five mules are allowed, and form part of the "obligatory" transport. A single mule could carry without difficulty all the bill-hooks and crowbars, leaving four available for entrenching tools. Nobody who has had any experience of both, could doubt that a battalion equipped with the forty sets of the full-sized pattern, which the remaining four mules can carry, would be far better provided than one furnished with ninety sets of the present light pattern.

The daily events of the five and a-half weeks we spent at Mastura afforded but few incidents worth record. One day passed very much like another, except that occasionally the scanty news that filtered in across the Arhanga Pass from Maidan, told of officers killed at their dinner by snipers, or rear guards cut up on their way back from some minor expedition. Once or twice the monotony was varied by small engagements on our own side of the Pass. And every night the cold grew more severe, until the thermometer one night recorded fourteen degrees of

frost; the season when snow was to be expected drew closer, and the end of the present aimless existence receded more indefinitely into the future. A day rarely passed without a foraging party being sent out in one direction or another. The very first day after our arrival, the 31st October, on which the Arhanga Pass was captured, some companies of the Regiment went out, with the 2nd 1st Gurkhas and a few cavalry, to raid some villages a couple of miles down the Mastura Valley, and succeeded in getting 100 mule loads of fodder, some grain and a few chickens, without encountering any opposition. This sort of thing went on nearly every day, the foraging parties occasionally being fired at as they returned to camp. But the night sniping had almost entirely ceased, and we were able to enjoy the luxury of going to bed without boots once more. Another advantage of Mastura was that it rejoiced in an abundant supply of excellent cold clear water close at hand. Till now water at most camps had been scanty, and what could be got was thick and cloudy, so that tea made from it looked as though milk had been put in it before any was actually added.

On November 1st some of our companies went out under command of Major Taylor, to explore some houses about a mile and a-half east of the camp, and made a great haul of grain. Lieutenant Keller, who had been placed in charge of the regimental transport, and who, in spite of never having gone through a regular transport course carried out his responsible duties with signal success, discovered a series of large pits on a terrace not far from one of the houses, crammed full of grain, beans, and other food stuffs, as well as chatties, grass shoes, and a variety of similar useless rubbish. The digging of these pits must have taken a considerable amount of time, and their existence proved that the Orakzai cannot have been very hopeful of withstanding the invasion of Tirah, unless, which is improbable, it is their customary method of

storing grain for the winter. Similar pits were found adjoining other houses, and no doubt a great many more were never discovered at all. When G Company had been some days in Mastura, they found some beneath the very ground on which their picquet was placed. The usual method adopted by the natives to conceal them was, after they had been filled with grain, to place matting over the top of the bags, then to scatter loose soil over the whole piece of field in which they had been dug, and so destroy all traces of recent excavation. Or sometimes they had burnt a heap of rubbish over the spot, or left a pile of corn stalks lying on top of it. In this particular case they had evidently been interrupted by the advance of the British force into the Mastura Valley before their preparations were fully completed, and one pit left half dug supplied the hint that led to the discovery of the rest. But it was not only in the fields outside the houses that the wily native had buried his property. Foraging parties soon learnt that the best way to find hidden stores was to sound the floors inside the houses, especially where they were covered over with heaps of maize or rubbish. On this very day a party of B Company made what promised to be an interesting discovery. The ground in the corner of a dark room sounded hollow, and on scraping away a few inches of soil they came upon a layer of boards evidently covering a pit underneath. The earth was carefully removed and the boards lifted, but all that the hole underneath contained was a miscellaneous collection of charpoys, poles, agricultural implements, grass shoes, spinning wheels, a primitive description of loom, matting, and other articles of domestic furniture. However, at the bottom of all this a second layer of boards was found, which on being tapped were seen evidently to be covering a second lower pit. This surely must contain something of value. So with redoubled energy the men set to work to clear out all the earth from the upper storey,

and after an hour's labour succeeded in raising the bottom boards. Alas, the contents of the lower pit proved to be as "worthless" as those above. More household articles, a number of empty chatties and a a few filled with sundry greasy and evil-smelling abominations, possibly medicines, and one sword, the only single thing worth carrying home. No more signal proof could have been afforded of the poverty of the inhabitants of Tirah than this instance of the immense pains they had taken to conceal such a worthless collection of absolute rubbish. Tirah was in truth a poverty-stricken country. The people appeared to employ all the slender means at their disposal upon fortifying their dwelling-houses, and no trace was to be seen anywhere of any attempt at ornamentation, or of the rudest conception of any art. Even their mosque at Bagh, their holy of holies and chief political as well as religious centre, was in appearance a mean building, little better than a cattle shed. Beyond an occasional worn and worm-eaten copy of the Koran, or a jezail or Pathan knife, there was nothing in the country to be found in the way of loot worth taking home as a memento of the campaign.

The 2nd November was devoted chiefly to smartening up camp and making companies snug by improving their picquets. Fresh meat and bread were now issued again for the first time for many days. Except on one or two days at Khorappa these were luxuries that we had not enjoyed since Shinawari days, and a prolonged diet of hard biscuit and "bully" beef is one that palls. Excellent compressed vegetables were also issued, as well as plenty of the beans collected by foraging parties, with the usual rations of groceries; and altogether the men considered that they were as well fed as in cantonments. The fresh meat had been driven up by the contractor's underlings from the base, and was usually fairly good, though the poor beasts had but scanty feeding and felt the cold terribly.

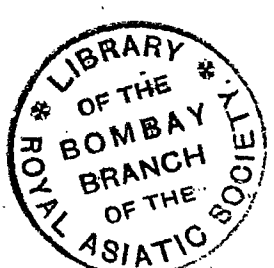
Quantities of them died of the cold, as did also a large number of transport ponies. These wretched beasts were constantly to be seen wandering about the outskirts of the camp, half dead with cold and hunger. The transport officers at Kohat, where they were distributed, had been far too busy with other duties to have them all properly branded, with the name or number of the corps to which they belonged, so when they once strayed they often remained unclaimed and perished miserably.

There was already talk of severing our communications with Shinawari and Kohat, and transferring the base of operations from the latter place to Peshawar, but unfortunately, the Government not knowing its own mind, this plan was not adopted till more than a month later.

In the evening a most successful camp fire and sing-song was given by the Regiment. Our well-known theatrical manager, Captain Riddell, was well to the fore, and the drums played between the songs. The band, or rather the band instruments, had never left Bareilly. Many officers not belonging to the Regiment, including General Hart, patronised the entertainment. The General was to be seen at all times, occasionally at astoundingly early hours in the cold mornings, moving about camp, seeing things with his own eyes and doing all he could for the comfort of the troops, and many were the cheery words he spoke when he visited the camp fires. He made it a point to get to know the men personally, which was much appreciated, and by none was the fitting, if tardy, recognition of his services by a K.C.B. more heartily welcomed than by the officers and men of the Derbyshire Regiment.

The foraging party next day, sent up towards the head of the Mastura Valley, had a few shots fired at them as they began to retire, but no mischief was done and a large amount of forage was brought in. Muffled reports as of artillery from the direction of

Maidan suggested that fighting might be going on over there, but proved to be only the explosions of blasting operations on the road over the Arhanga Pass. By now the field telegraph had been brought through to Mastura.



CHAPTER VIII.

IN THE MASTURA VALLEY—(CONTINUED).

ON the 4th November Headquarters with C, D, F, and H Companies, moved up to the Sempagha Pass, relieving there the Bombay Pioneers and the Jhind Infantry, and on this bleak spot many of us spent the next five uneventful weeks. Our duties here were to provide escorts for convoys passing over the Kotal, and to hold the hills on either side of the Pass against enterprising Orakzai. The Companies were distributed as follows:—The high ridge on the east running at right angles to the Kotal was, in remembrance of past glories, given the name of Inkerman Hill, and was occupied by one company disposed, at first in four, and later on in two picquets. The ridge on the west, which was the higher of the two, was called Alma Heights, and its summit was held by a strong half company, the remaining two sections of the same company occupying small intervening knolls between Alma Heights and our camp below, and to the north of, the Kotal. At night the two companies in camp found small picquets, each of the strength of one section, on the Kotal itself, near the front of the pass on the Mastura road, and midway between the camp and Inkerman Hill. When it is remembered that in addition to these heavy picquet duties, road picquets of fifty and forty men each had also to be furnished daily on the Khorappa and Mastura roads, it seems surprising that the Headquarter Companies managed to find time and men for the ordinary duties and fatigues of a camp, for erecting shelters for themselves, and for making the numerous paths which

were necessary to connect the picquets with one another and with the camp.

The companies picqueting Inkerman Hill and Alma Heights were relieved every four days.

We found the Sempagha a cold but healthy situation, the worst point about it perhaps being that in the camp below the Kotal we lost the sun about 3.30 p.m., which had the effect of making the days rather short and the afternoons cold and cheerless. To the east of the pass on the south side a most excellent and abundant spring was found, which provided an ample supply of delicious water.

The remaining four companies, A, B, E, and G, meanwhile stayed on down at Mastura, under command of Major Smith-Dorrien, and in the afternoon of the same day E Company was sent under Captain Bowman to raid a village a mile from camp. Owing to some of the mules being rather bobbery about carrying the loot collected, the retirement was delayed until it began to get dusk, and two wily Orakzais managed to creep up and discharge their jezails within fifty yards of a couple of mules held by Captain Bowman and Major Smith-Dorrien, knocking over the mule held by the former. It was impossible to see the enemy, as they were behind trees, and so, leaving the loads on the ground and collecting the mule drivers, a somewhat undignified retreat had to be made, not, however, before the hidden foe had succeeding in reloading their long weapons and discharging two more bullets without effect before 150 yards had been covered.

As, in addition to the loss of the loads, the commander of E Company had dropped a valuable pair of binoculars, which doubtless aided the vision of the enemy next day, all felt that they had been thoroughly scored off.

On the anniversary of the gunpowder plot A Company of the Derbys, Captain Menzies, with two companies each of the Devons and Gurkhas, were ordered

out under Major Smith-Dorrien to loot some villages in the direction of the Waran Valley, some three or four miles from camp. Six hundred mules were taken to bring in the captured grain. For a wonder these villages were found not to be entirely deserted as usual. As the force approached some twenty or thirty men were seen to move up out of them on to the hill-side above, and precautions were taken to secure the line of retreat by sending a company of Gurkhas to occupy a height commanding our right flank, the left flank being safe. When this company had reached its position, the advance was continued up a deep nullah, with companies on the high ground above, and as each village in turn was gained, transport animals and parties were told off to loot. The enemy soon opened a long-range fire, and covering parties had to be pushed further to the front, to render the looting party safe from bullets. One of the foremost of these had rather a lively time. After two and a-half hours all transport animals were reported as loaded and moving safely off towards camp, and the withdrawal of troops began, a very rapid retirement from one position to another, so arranged that as one party retired there were always others in position to cover their retreat. At about this period General Hart arrived on the scene, and as usual at once headed for the spot where he was most likely to hear the whizz of bullets. However, the enemy were in small numbers, and very half-hearted, and declined to leave the heights as the troops got farther away from them. No doubt they were alarmed by the persistency with which Captain Menzies drew a bead on them whenever they showed. By 3 p.m. the whole party was safely back in camp, with all the mules loaded and only one Gurkha wounded.

November 5th being the anniversary of Inkerman, where the 95th had so distinguished itself, Major Smith-Dorrien organised another sing-song to

celebrate the occasion in the evening, round a large bonfire near Captain Bosanquet's picquet. The General, who had previously honoured us with his company at dinner, Colonel Richardson, commanding the 18th Bengal Lancers, and many other officers attended. The drums had been brought in from the Sempägha, and an excellent programme was provided. The General made a speech complimenting the regiment on their behaviour at Dargai.

All this time there had been a singular dearth of news from the other brigades across the Arhanga. We heard little or nothing of their doings, or of any intended movements. This was so much the more remarkable in that the postal arrangements, which up to the end almost of our stay at Shinawari had been sketchy to a degree, had now reached a high pitch of efficiency. Letters, for instance, were delivered in Mastura, soon after midday, which had been written only four days before in Bareilly. Parcels too were now coming through by post, and many little comforts could be obtained in this way, such as warm clothing, chocolate, and various other delicacies. Telegrams, on the contrary, were still not to be relied upon, at least for private messages. The single wire of the Field Telegraph was in too great demand for "State Urgent" messages to be of much service to ordinary individuals. Even these, at an earlier stage, often took longer to get through than troops marching on foot. On November 3rd a telegram from England was delivered to the Adjutant from de Kantzow, dated October 6th, to say he was coming out off leave to rejoin, and six days later he arrived at the Sempagha himself. This telegram arrived at Bombay of course, and probably at Kohat, the same day it was despatched from England.

However, after November 5th, the absence of news from Maidan was put an end to by the posting of regular bulletins of anything that occurred there at the Brigade Office tent. Not that they were very

cheerful reading as a rule, but it was at least interesting to know what was going on in Maidan. The 6th November had been appointed as the day on which a big jirgah was to be held, to announce to the tribesmen the terms of the Indian Government, but no jirgah worth speaking of had come in to hear them, and the idea gained ground that no amount of damage that could be inflicted on the country would induce the Afridis to hand in their tale of rifles and declare themselves defeated. The prospect of a lengthened occupation by the Force began to be generally discussed, and in view of such a possibility a survey was made for winter quarters. The sun now set at 4.45, and the evenings became chilly immediately after sundown.

This morning at breakfast we heard heavy firing about a mile from camp, and could see through glasses a fight going on in the direction of the Arhanga Pass, which we heard afterwards was an attack on a convoy by the inhabitants of the villages we had looted the day before, all brought on by a coffee shop wallah, who in spite of warnings had tried a short cut some way off the regular convoy road. The rash man paid the penalty with his life, and two of his mules were also killed. Three companies of the Devons were sent out to reinforce the convoy escort, and accounted for ten of the enemy with no loss to themselves, the men returning with haversacks bulging with tins of jam, biscuits and other of the coffee shop wallah's stores that were scattered by the road-side.

In the afternoon a native came into camp with a most interesting tale of adventure to relate. He was a hospital dresser in No. 44 Field Hospital, who had been captured by the enemy on the 18th October, the day of the first action at Dargai, and carried off to an Afridi village some twenty miles from Mastura. There he had been made to work hard, grinding corn and doing all menial work, but was not ill-treated. He had at last succeeded in making good his escape at night, and gave many particulars of the doings of

the Afridis "chez eux." All the near villages he said were deserted, and the further ones crammed with men all armed with guns of sorts.

On the 8th November a party of the 2nd 1st Gurkhas had a rather successful shoot. On their way out to occupy a picquet post on the Arhanga Pass, early in the morning, they put up some 250 of the enemy, who were evidently lying in wait for convoys, and bagged a very fair number of them without any loss to themselves. The enemy were completely surprised and routed, leaving seven dead, with their rifles, upon the ground and four wounded. Two of the latter were brought as prisoners into camp, and deposited for treatment in a native field hospital, where they were objects of great interest to visitors.

On the 9th November Keller arrived with our tents, which Hallowes had brought up to Khorappa to meet him from Shinawari. Some of them were pitched, but the general opinion was that the men were more comfortable in their bivouacs, which were really warm, good shelters, constructed to keep out cold or bullets.

On the 11th General Sir Power Palmer, commanding the lines of communication, passed through to see Sir William Lockhart, with a view to arranging the transfer of the base of the expedition from Shinawari to Peshawar, and the abandonment of our present line of communication. It seemed a pity to give up the excellent roads that had now been made with prodigious labour right through from Shinawari, across three difficult passes, but no doubt there were the best of reasons for it. Camels, which require good roads, had been passing through to Maidan for some days, but work on the improvement of the roads was still going on. Private Autie of C Company, on the Sempagha, was severely hurt on the 9th by a piece of rock hurled up in the course of blasting operations by the road-side.

The 13th was quite a red-letter day, marked by

an unusually interesting and successful fight. A foraging party was sent up the Mastura Valley under command of Major Smith-Dorrien, escorted by a squadron of the 18th Bengal Lancers, one company each of the Devons, Derbys, and Jhind Infantry, and two of the Gurkhas. They started at 9 a.m., and after proceeding two miles-and-a-half a company of Gurkhas was sent to crown some commanding heights on the left. The remainder of the troops halted until it was seen that the Gurkhas were in possession of the height, when a steady advance was continued until a very large village full of forage was reached. About this time some of the enemy fired a few shots, and the force was pushed forward so as to guard the foraging party in this village and in another village rather farther in advance. It soon became apparent that large numbers of the enemy were gathering in all the villages and hill-sides around. In one field about 1800 yards off over 100 men were counted, but unfortunately we had no artillery. Major Money, 18th Bengal Lancers, soon sent back word from the further village that the fire was getting too hot to load animals, and these latter were in consequence ordered to withdraw and load at the nearer village. The enemy showed in large numbers then, keeping out of range and working round our right flank so as to cut us off from camp, and Captain Hatch of the Gurkhas, at his own suggestion, was sent as hard as he could lay legs to the ground to seize and hold a commanding height a mile-and-a-half off, from which he might prevent this enveloping movement.

At the same time a determined attack was made on the company of the Devons posted to cover the advanced village, and E Company of the Derbys, which had been watching a pass, was withdrawn to help the Devons. The latter had a merry time of it, but held their ground obstinately, getting two men wounded. At 12.30, as it was undesirable to risk heavy losses for the sake of a little forage, an order

MASTURA VALLEY.

Scene of Action of 13th November, 1897.

From a sketch by Captain F. B. MAURICE, 2nd Batt. Derbyshire Regiment.

[*To face page 128.*

was issued for all animals whether loaded or unloaded to withdraw into the bed of the Mastura and move towards camp, so as to leave the troops free to wrestle with the enemy. While this order was being carried out Major Money was hit in the stomach, and from the way he fell we feared he was seriously wounded; however, thanks to a thick kamarband, he only had the wind knocked out of him and got off with a severe bruise.

The retirement now became general but very steady, every yard of the ground being disputed, and the line was soon clear of the villages when Captain Bowman was severely wounded, and though he tried to go on in command of his company he soon got faint from loss of blood and had to be sent to the rear. Unfortunately at this moment the only other officer out with the company, Second-Lieutenant Way, had fallen back some little distance with the support, and taken up a position in rear to cover the next retirement. However, Keller, the "Drabi-walla," having seen his transport animals safely moving to camp, appeared on the scene at this moment and took command of E Company. The retirement thus continued, halts being made first to allow the Gurkha company on our left flank to descend, and next to cover the retirement of Captain Hatch's company. The enemy were most enterprising, and shouting and yelling tried to charge the Gurkhas on the left flank, causing them to fix bayonets, but the fire of the companies in the low ground prevented them from carrying out their intention. At three p.m., when we were within a mile of camp, the Afridis ceased to pursue.

General Hart had been looking on during the latter half of the engagement, and was most complimentary as to the steadiness of the troops, and the admirable manner in which they had been handled by Major Smith-Dorrien. The casualties were only seven wounded, and none of those dangerous. It was

one of those occasions on which a slight mistake on the part of the commander, a moment's hesitation in grasping the situation, might have entailed some such disaster as occurred only too commonly elsewhere during this campaign, and the troops had every reason to be thankful they were in such skilful hands.

At night we were treated to a little sniping, which latterly had somewhat gone out of vogue. The day's proceedings generally did not bode particularly well for the successful issue of the big jirgah held at Maidan the day before, in which the terms of the Government were announced to the assembled representatives of the Orakzai, but nevertheless they proved to be the last instance of active hostilities on the part of this tribe, if indeed the Afridis had not been mainly responsible for them. 'The Orakzai were ordered to surrender 500 rifles and pay a fine of 30,000 rupees within a fortnight, not a very heavy punishment in consideration of their offence.' Indeed a tale was current in camp which, whether true or not, was instructive as showing the general opinion as to the leniency of the sentence, to the effect that the grey-beards who listened to the terms with the usual stolidly-impassive countenances of their kind, had brought to the jirgah with them twice the amount of the fine specified as a *first instalment*.

Captain Bowman's wound was serious, but happily not dangerous. He had been ordered to hold a certain rocky place on commanding ground some 500 yards behind the village, to cover the Gurkhas' retirement, and to remain there till he received an order to withdraw. About ten minutes later he heard a shout to retire, but not being certain where it came from, or whether all the Gurkhas had completed their retirement, he remained where he was, keeping up a steady fire on the village, until a second shout from the rear was heard telling him to retire. He was then lying down with his firing line under cover, but seeing Major Smith-Dorrien's orderly officer in the distance

He rose and walked a few paces to the rear, and shouted to him for information, thereby exposing his back to the enemy's fire. In a campaign like this, against an enemy whose marksmanship is faultless and eyesight marvellous, such commanding stature as Captain Bowman's has the decided disadvantage of making its owner a particularly conspicuous target. They had had several shots at him on previous occasions before they got him now. The bullet, a Snider probably, fired from a distance of about 800 yards, struck him sideways in the middle of the back, passed along under the flesh, fortunately without touching a bone, and came out at the back of the right arm, leaving a clear wound twelve inches long. He made a wonderfully rapid recovery, with the assistance of a vast number of cheroots, and a fortnight later was well enough to be moved down to the base hospital at Pindi, hoping to be able to return to duty with the Regiment shortly. Directly he got there he developed enteric fever, and on the top of that pneumonia in both lungs, of which accumulation of complaints he finally cured himself—so he declared—by eating four dozen oranges a day!

It is much to be regretted, by the way, that the nomenclature applied to wounds in casualty lists should be such as to very often convey entirely erroneous impressions to the majority of those who read them. For instance, when a man's friends read in the papers that he has been severely wounded, they are naturally apt to imagine that there is cause for grave anxiety, which is rarely the case unless the wound is described as "dangerous." Wounds are officially returned as "slight," "severe," or "dangerous." A mere bruise or bullet graze which scarcely breaks the skin is called a "slight" wound, and men described as slightly wounded often have no occasion to discontinue their duties. A "severe" wound means that an injury has been sustained which requires a man to be admitted to a field hospital for

treatment, and does not imply that there is any danger to life. When this is the case the term "dangerous" is employed. Even so it must not be forgotten that an injury which would occasion no serious alarm if all the appliances and restfulness of a permanent hospital were available, becomes much more serious and is therefore classified as dangerous, when only the very limited resources of a hospital in the field are at hand, with its rough tent accommodation, possibly over-worked staff, and with perhaps a long journey over stony mountain tracks in a jolting dhoolie in prospect before the patient can reach any better accommodation. If more suitable and expressive terms for the classification of wounds cannot be devised than these, it would at least be as well if steps were taken to make the exact meaning of them more generally known than at present, and thus avoid a good deal of preventible anxiety.

On the 15th November, in view of the determined attack upon the foraging party of the 13th, reinforcements arrived from Maidan in the shape of Major Norton's Battery of Mountain Artillery, and a most excellent Political officer, Mr. Donald. Sir William Lockhart and his Chief of the Staff, General Nicholson, also came over for a few hours and inspected our camp, not forgetting, with that kindness of heart which so endears him to all who came into contact with him, to pay a visit to the sick and wounded in the field hospitals. Our new Political soon got the Orakzai in hand, and signs of peace began to blossom in the Mastura Valley. Rifles and fines were gradually paid up; forage was voluntarily collected and paid for at the villages round about; and bazaars were established near the camp for the sale of fowls, fresh milk, eggs, vegetables and the like luxuries, as well as old arms.

We had up till now been a good deal troubled by a very athletic breed of fleas, and had got accustomed to them, but a new and worse form of plague was

making itself felt in the shape of many howling and yelling dogs, which made night hideous and banished sleep. One used to wake and fancy one was at the Crystal Palace Dog Show. The villages adjoining the camp were full of these brutes, which had stayed behind when their masters abandoned their homes, and being famished with hunger came prowling around the camp at night seeking what they might devour, and fighting with one another over choice tit-bits. It was not until the arrival of Major Taylor from the Sempagha some days later that this form of pest became bearable, and this was brought about by the frequent patrolling of the afore-mentioned officer throughout the moonlight nights, armed with handfuls of stones.

The last fortnight or more of our stay in Mastura was entirely uneventful. The cold at times was intense, but although the frosts were severe we were luckily spared wet and wind. Though the picquet occupied by E Company in the bed of the river was answerable for a good deal of sickness, the men on the whole kept wonderfully well. The Regiment probably owed their comparative immunity from sickness in a large measure to the fact that, for the best part of a year previous to their starting on active service, they had been quartered at an exceptionally healthy station like Bareilly, whilst two companies had spent the last hot weather at Ranikhet; for the only other British regiment in the Mastura Valley, the Devons, had over 200 men in hospital at Mastura alone. But they had come from Peshawar, a station which enjoys the unenviable reputation of being one of the most feverish in India, and in addition had already been close on six months in the field, whereas we had been barely three. Fever and sickness of one sort or another in this, as in almost every campaign that British troops have of late years been engaged in, were responsible for an infinitely greater loss of effective strength than the actual fighting. During

the course of the campaign there were in round numbers 1000 admissions to hospital from the usual injuries sustained in a campaign, and 11,000 from disease. There were only 100 deaths from wounds and injuries, but 600 from the diseases of the tropics.* Nor must it be forgotten in this connection that every regiment before proceeding on field service is subjected to a rigorous medical examination, in which every man not in a robust state of health, or unlikely from any cause to be able to stand the hardships of campaigning, is mercilessly weeded out. On the other hand the exposure and hardships which the troops were of necessity called upon to endure in the Tirah Campaign, probably entailed a severer strain upon the strength of officers and men alike than any other campaign for many years past.

* These figures are taken from a speech made by the Marquis of Lansdowne, Secretary of State for War, on the 10th May, 1899, at a dinner in London in connection with the establishment of a School for the Study of Tropical Diseases, and apparently only apply to actual admissions to hospital, excluding those killed outright in the field, and those slightly wounded who were not admitted to hospital. The number of killed during the campaign was close on 300 (*cf.* page 177).

CHAPTER IX.

THE EXODUS FROM TIRAH.

On the 23rd November it was definitely announced that the base of operations was to be changed from Kohat to Peshawar, and that the line of communications *vid* the Sempagha Pass and Shinawari was to be closed. There appeared to be no advantage to be gained by prolonging the sojourn of the force in Tirah, even if the imminent approach of winter with all the attendant discomforts of snow, wet, and cold had not rendered such a project well nigh impossible. The whole of the Orakzai and several sections of the Afridi tribes had tendered their submission, but the most important and powerful of the latter, the Zakka Khels, together with some of the Kuki and Aka Khels, had shown not the slightest symptoms of any disposition to surrender. It was accordingly decided that the two Divisions of the main column of the Tirah Field Force should quit Tirah for the neighbourhood of Peshawar, which was only forty miles distant, marching down the Bara and Mastura valleys respectively, in pursuance of the policy of visiting as many parts of the enemy's country as possible. It was not likely that the Afridis would regard the exit from Tirah in any other light than that of the retirement of an unsuccessful force and a practical admission of failure. Nevertheless, in order at least to let their leaders know the reason for his departure, Sir William caused the following proclamation to be circulated among the clans by special messengers sent out by the Political officers.

"I am going away from these highlands of Maidan

because snow is coming, and I do not wish my troops to be exposed to the cold of winter. But I am not going to leave your country. On the contrary I shall remain in your country until you fully comply with the terms of Government, and it is my intention to attack you in your other settlements during the winter. Whatever your evil advisers may tell you, I say that the Afridis attacking the English is like flies assailing a lion, and, as an old friend of many of you my advice to you is to submit, and so let your wives and families return from the cold mountains to their homes."

In preparation for the march to Peshawar all heavy baggage and surplus stores, all sick and weakly men, and all staff and departmental officers and others not absolutely required on the march, were sent round to Peshawar *vid* the old line of communication to Kohat, in order that the remaining troops might move on the lightest possible scale. On November 27th, the headquarters of the Regiment moved down from the Sempagha to the camp at Mastura, with H Company, leaving Major Wylly, with C, D, and F Companies in sole possession of the pass. The same day all our tents and heavy baggage were sent back to Kohat *en route* for Peshawar, under Lieutenant Ritchie. The 2nd Brigade, under General Gaselee, with the divisional troops of the 1st Division and General Symons, marched back over the Arhanga Pass from Bagh to join us at Mastura ready to start down the valley. This, by the way, was the first occasion during the campaign that the whole of the 1st Division had been concentrated in one camp. On the 1st December, General Symons inspected the five companies of the Regiment at headquarters, and very well and workmanlike they looked, with their khaki coats and putties and blue serge trousers, and their belts all dyed to a uniform light brown tint by being dipped in tea. Four days later he paid a visit to the Sempagha and inspected the three companies of the

detachment there, expressing himself as much pleased with all he saw.

Orders were received this day for the start down the Mastura valley to be made on the 7th Dec., so the edict went forth for a big farewell camp-fire concert to be held on the night of the 6th. This proved to be the most successful of our many sing-songs, as in addition to many fine performers in the Regiment a good deal of outside talent was contributed by the Devons and a Mountain Battery. We had two huge bonfires and half the men of the brigade were assembled round them, and also Generals Symons and Hart and their respective staffs. Amusements had been scarce in Mastura, and these entertainments were most useful to relieve the monotony of camp life.

It was with feelings of unalloyed satisfaction that the Regiment turned their backs next morning upon the Mastura camp, and set out down the valley. For the first few miles a double road had been prepared, and the march being short all were comfortable in their new camp at Mishti Bazar by an early hour in the afternoon. There they were joined by the three companies of the Sempagha detachment, who were no less delighted that their long sojourn on the top of the pass was at an end. They had been relieved there by the Nabha Infantry, who picqueted the pass until all troops and transport from Khorappa had passed through. Before quitting the pass they did not forget to set fire to their mess and shelters on the hills, so as to leave nothing of value for the now repentant and disarmed Orakzai.

Considerable changes had taken place in the numbers of officers and men with the Battalion since it left Shinawari. The full strength there was twenty-one officers, exclusive of two attached, and 787 rank and file. The present strength was nineteen officers, with two attached, and 540 men. Of the original twenty-one officers seven were no longer with the Battalion. Captain Smith was dead, Captain

Bowman invalided from his wound, Lieutenant Attfield had been sent back sick from Shinawari, and Captain Slessor, Lieutenants Way and Hobbs from Mastura, whilst Lieutenant Ritchie had gone round to Jamrud, from where he was soon after invalided, in charge of the heavy baggage. On the other hand the number of officers had been increased by the addition of five new arrivals. On October 28th Major Smith-Dorrien and Lieutenant Maurice, on November 9th Lieutenant de Kantzow, and on November 23rd Lieutenant Pye had rejoined from leave in England, and on December 5th, the last day before the road from Shinawari was closed, Lieutenant Phelps, who, being the senior subaltern present when the Regiment started on field service, had had the thankless task of staying behind in command of the depôt at Bareilly, arrived at the post of the detachment on the Sempagha.*

The night of the 7th December, at Mishti Bazar, was cold and rainy, but we were all fairly comfortable in our bivouacs, although it was anything but pleasant to turn out in the grey of the morning and to find that rain was falling gently, but persistently.

The 1st Brigade left Mishti Bazar in two columns. The left column, with which was the General, went over the Sangra Pass by a fairly decent road; the right column, with which was the Derbyshire Regiment, followed the course of the Mastura river, which had to be forded very many times, so that the right column—though the actual distance was perhaps not very much longer—did not reach camp until about an hour after the left column. The actual distance was eight miles by the pass and probably ten by the river. Our camp for the night was very fairly comfortable at a place called Haidal Khel, in the country of the Feroz Khel section of the Daulatzai,

* From here the narrative follows almost literally accounts published in "I'm Ninety-five,"—The Regimental Paper—of April, 1898.

gentry who had been recently fighting against us, but who, having made their submission and paid up their fines, were now quite disposed to be friendly and were certainly on excellent terms with our Political officer, Mr. Donald. During the afternoon, Major-General Symons, accompanied by C Company and a Company of Gurkhas, reconnoitred a little known pass leading from Haidal Khel, over the hills to the North into the Waran Valley, inhabited by the Aka Khels. In consequence of this reconnaissance it was determined to visit the Waran Valley, and endeavour to repay its inhabitants for the attentions they had recently showered upon Brigadier-General Kempster's Brigade, when that force had entered—and left—that valley.

The 2nd Battalion 1st Gurkhas were accordingly sent out at daybreak on the 9th with orders to occupy the Kotal, and at 7.30, a column consisting of six companies each of the Derbys, Devons, 30th Punjab Infantry, and 21st Madras Pioneers, with two Mountain Batteries and the Nabha Infantry, left for the Waran Valley, while the remaining companies of these corps escorted the transport and baggage down the Mastura Valley to our next camp at Hissar, only some three miles further on. We reached the top of the pass about nine a.m., and preceded by the Gurkhas descended quickly into the valley below, the women in the numerous villages with which this end of the Waran Valley is thickly dotted, being seen driving the cattle hastily away into the northern hills. We did not waste time; the Gurkhas and ourselves were sent to the western end of the valley with orders to burn and to destroy, while the Devons busied themselves chiefly with the villages clustered in the neighbourhood of the hill on which stood the summer residence—replete with every modern convenience—of the notorious Mullah Saiyid Akbar; the 30th Punjab Infantry being left to picquet the hills over which we had crossed and to guard our left flank when the time came to retire.

It will be remembered that Saiyid Akbar's house had been visited by some of the troops that left Maidan with General Kempster for an expedition into the Waran Valley, on the 13th November, that expedition which had so disastrous a termination at the Tseri Kandao Pass on the 16th—thirty-three killed and thirty-six wounded. The Aka Khels on that occasion had offered little or no opposition, till the forces began to retire, and consequently their villages and houses had been spared, with the exception of Saiyid Akbar's. This was a strongly built and fortified-house, and was blown up by the Sappers and Miners. By now, however, all the damage then inflicted upon the building had been completely restored; wherein the followers of the Mullah had shown themselves a little previous, for it was again destroyed and this time levelled to the ground. This was the house in which all the highly interesting correspondence of the Mullahs was found, referred to in the first chapter.

It was soon apparent that few if any of the warriors of the Aka Khel were "at home," and it afterwards transpired that the majority had gone out for a day's *shikar* with Sir William Lockhart's force marching down the Bara Valley. We were practically undisturbed in our work of destruction and soon some fifty or sixty villages were in flames; but ere long men began to gather on the hills, and when we began to retire eastwards about 2.30, we were as usual followed up. The retirement was covered by the Gurkhas and ourselves, and the next day Major-General Symons, who watched the whole proceedings from the top of the pass, issued a complimentary order upon the manner in which the retirement had been conducted. During the afternoon the few Aka Khels, who had hurried home just too late to prevent the destruction of their homesteads, were joined by some Zakka Khels, armed with Lee-Metford rifles, but though the retirement was followed up

almost to the borders of the Orakzai country our losses were but trifling. One havildar of the Imperial Service Infantry was killed and one was wounded, as were also one Bengal sapper and a transport driver. The casualties in the Battalion were as follows :—

No. 4499 Private J. Holden, D Company, severely wounded, No. 3706 Private H. Redgate, B Company, slightly wounded.

We finally reached our camp at about 7.30 p.m. after a hard day, having inflicted 50,000 rupees' worth of damage on the Aka Khel.

On the 10th December we left camp at Hissar about 8.45, forded the Mastura River two or three times, and finally reached a pretty camp at Andkhel —about seven miles—at 1.30 p.m. Rain came on towards evening, continued all that night and the whole of the next day, so that nobody was sorry to find that we were here to have a day's rest in order to let the 2nd Brigade, which was behind us, close well up. Andkhel is at the foot of the Sapri or Walnut Tree Pass over which we were to cross, cutting off the bend of the Mastura River, which here makes a sharp turn to the south. On the 11th, in spite of the heavy rain, the Sappers and Pioneers were engaged all day long in improving the road over the pass, and a very early start was decided on for the next morning, as General Symons hoped that the 1st Brigade would that night reach Sapri, some eleven miles distant.

On turning out of our bivouacs on the 12th we were all delighted to find it was a fine frosty morning, with snow lying quite low down on the surrounding hills.

The Sapri Pass was quite unknown, and is said to have never previously been crossed by any European. "The path the whole way through was commanded in such a manner as to require but a few of the enemy to make the passage of a force very difficult and dangerous, if not impossible. Fortunately for us the

enemy failed to take advantage of the position. For the first two miles of the glen the ascent was gradual enough, and the track a wide, well-worn one, but the last half mile to the top was extremely difficult. The hills were beautifully wooded throughout on the southern side, principally with the evergreen holly ilex, and when soon after dawn the clouds lifted, the view down the path to the Peshawar Valley, showing the snow-covered heights between the steep dark wooded slopes was very fine indeed. The descent for a short distance from the top of the pass on the north side was easy, but soon the gorge became more contracted and rocky, and the advance had to be delayed from time to time to allow of the Sappers in front blasting the rocks to clear a path for the laden mules. The drop in elevation from the top of the pass to Sapri itself was about 2300 feet.

With a mass of transport animals carrying supplies for the force, the long line stretched along the entire road from end to end, a distance of eleven miles, and it was five p.m. before the last of the Brigade was able to make a start. The rearguard of the 30th Punjab Infantry, with G and H Companies of the Battalion, had to bivouac on the top of the pass, and the transport that could be passed along down the descent was collected and parked at Kwaja Khidda, where there was water and a little open space. General Hart had caused bonfires to be lit at short intervals the whole way down the road, wood luckily being plentiful, and by the light of these fires many animals were passed along the road during the dark hours of the night. This was the most curious feature of the crossing, and was perhaps unique in the passage of any military force through a long defile and over a difficult mountain range."

At Kwaja Khidda the Battalion passed the night, during which one man, No. 4958 Private E. Edinborough, F Company, while engaged in lighting a fire close to the camp, was fired at from the wooded hills

close by and was severely wounded in that part of the human frame which Tom Ingoldsby says "it is equally indecorous to present to a friend or an enemy." The stock of the rifle of another man who was with Private Edinborough was smashed at the same time.

The Battalion went on early to Sapri, G and H Companies, which had spent the night on the top of the Sapri Pass, coming on with the 30th Punjab Infantry, but before the column was clear of Kwaja Khidda the bivouac was fired into again, a mule being killed and two followers wounded. We halted at Sapri to let the Regiment get together and to have breakfast, having passed through a very fine gorge. At Sapri we found ourselves in a very much warmer climate. Leaving Sapri, the road, after passing some fields, ran through a very narrow rocky gorge, and after having crossed a stream, the track ascended on to higher ground to the left, and passing round some low spurs brought us by a level and easy road to the new camp at Mamanai, near Swai Kot, just beyond Barkai and near to General Hammond's camp.

At Mamanai we remained the whole of the 14th December and were able to see the rear guard action of the 3rd Brigade from the hill to the west of our camp. On the 15th we left camp about 10 a.m. and fording the Mastura River which had here joined us—close to camp—we marched by a new road some ten miles to Ilamgudar, crossing the Bara River just before arrival in camp. The next day, the 16th, we marched some four miles into Bara, having after making a complete circle returned to within about thirty miles of Kohat, which we had left nearly three months before.

CHAPTER X.

THE EXPEDITION UP THE BAZAR VALLEY.

Two days after our arrival at Bara the Regiment marched into Jamrud, and once again pitched their tents and discarded—for a while—their bivouacs. But though Tirah had been vacated, the campaign was not yet over. Sir William Lockhart had still to redeem the promise he made to the Zakkas on leaving Maidan, to attack them in their other settlements during the winter, unless they fully complied with the terms of the Government. Moreover the road through the Khyber Pass had been closed ever since the supineness of the Peshawar authorities in the previous August had enabled the pass Afridis to work their will upon the forts that guarded it, and this had still to be reopened and the Khyber posts restored. Also the recent evacuation of Tirah, even without the assiduous representations of the Mullahs, can hardly have failed to appear to the eyes of the Afridis in the light of a practical failure on the part of the expeditionary force to accomplish the objects for which it was formed, and in view of these considerations alone it was highly desirable that offensive operations of some sort should be resumed against them with the least possible delay.

It was therefore decided that steps should immediately be taken to reoccupy the Khyber and destroy the defences of the Zakka Khel villages in its neighbourhood, and further to despatch a column to lay waste their settlements in the Bazar Valley. The troops of the 2nd Division, after the incessant hard fighting which attended their arduous retreat down

the Bara valley, were to be given a much needed rest. The operations now about to be undertaken were entrusted to the 1st Division, whose march down the valley of the Mastūra had been comparatively easy and unmolested, combined with the Peshawar column. The troops composing this column, under command of Brigadier-General Hammond, had hitherto been compelled to remain more or less inactive spectators of the campaign, and were simply spoiling for a fight. Accordingly the 1st Division and the Peshawar column were gradually concentrated, between the 15th and 19th December, at Jamrud, in readiness to move up the Khyber and Bazar valleys.

On the 23rd General Hammond's column marched out up the Khyber and reoccupied Ali Masjid without encountering any sign of the enemy's presence. Next morning the 1st Division followed them, and halted at the village of Lala China, close to Ali Masjid fort.

The Khyber has always been to Englishmen a place of ill-repute, and never did any place appear to deserve an evil reputation more thoroughly than the famous pass as we first saw it on that bleak, stormy day at the end of December. The gaunt, bare mountains, crowned with grey clouds of mist, looked more than ever huge and frowning, while at every turn of the winding road the wind dashed the sleet and rain into our faces, sending us shivering at each halt to get what shelter we might under the lee of some friendly boulder. Scarcely a mile but we passed some burned-out fort or gutted block-house, silently reproaching us for having left them so long in undisturbed possession of the Afridis, their blackened ruins looking strangely appropriate to the wild scenery around them.

As we descended to the open space above the Khyber stream, where we were to encamp, just below the historic fort of Ali Masjid, we began to realise the damage done us by the Afridis. The caravanserai, in peace time crowded twice a week with the heavily

laden caravans passing between India and Afghanistan, no longer existed. The barracks of the Khyber Rifles were in ruins, and of the fort itself little remained but the outer walls and towers, too solid to be destroyed without dynamite. In fact, throughout the whole length of the English Khyber from Landi Kotal to Fort Maude, almost under the noses of our guns, a determined attempt had been made to wipe out every trace of English authority. There was not an Englishman in the force which entered the pass that day who did not understand what the effect on the whole frontier would be if we were to fail to inflict condign punishment on the tribes for such an act of daring insolence.

Later, when we had settled down to our routine work of occupation, kept busy with daily and nightly picquets, escorting convoys and foraging parties, the Khyber began to appear a more tolerable place of residence; yet few of us ever quite overcame our first impression of the pass, and most of us will always consider it one of the least pleasant places to which the fortune of war took us during the Tirah expedition. Of all the enemies we had to contend with there, the wind was by far the worst. The Khyber Pass is so shaped that at Ali Masjid even the lightest breeze becomes a hurricane. At the spot where we were encamped the pass widens slightly so as to form a circular basin almost entirely shut in by towering mountains. Out of this basin the road passes to the north just below the fort of Ali Masjid, and enters a narrow gorge some two miles in length, which in its turn opens out into what may be described as almost a plain. This plain, the home of the Khyber Zakka Khels, is thickly dotted with villages, and the land being very fertile is all under cultivation. It is some five miles in length, about three miles across at its widest part, and ends eventually in Landi Kotal fort, our most northerly post in the Khyber. The prevailing wind in the pass is from the north-east,

and chilled by the snows of Afghanistan it comes pouring down the Ali Masjid gorge, gaining strength with every yard of its advance, till, by the time it reached our camping ground, the mild breezes of Landi Kotal had become a howling gale, defying the warmest clothing or the stoutest tent. In fact, had we been encamped in the mouth of an enormous bassoon, with a giant trying the full force of his lungs at the other end, we could not have fared worse. We tried every device to obtain a little shelter, surrounding ourselves with stone walls, burying our tent-pegs under rocks, weighting the skirts of the tents with piles of stones, but all to no purpose. The wind, cannoning against the mountain sides, seemed to come from every quarter at once, and when, as only too often happened, we were visited by a real storm, no tent could long remain standing.

At Lala China we got orders that the 1st Brigade with the 1st Division headquarters were to advance into the Bazar valley *vid* Alachi and Karamna, the 2nd Brigade with Sir William Lockhart going in by the China Pass. Seven days' rations were carried by the commissariat, and three days' in regimental charge. Our total strength was 3642 fighting men, nearly 4000 mules, and 2500 followers, made up of the following units: 2nd Battalion Derbyshire Regiment, 2nd Battalion Royal Sussex Regiment, 30th Punjab Infantry, 2nd 1st Gurkhas, 21st Madras Pioneers, No. 1 Bengal Sappers and Miners, No. 4 Bombay Sappers, No. 1 Kohat Mountain Battery and No. 6 British Field Hospital, and No. 34 Native Field Hospital. The towers at Lala China were blown up and the wood taken. Parties of the enemy were prowling about near camp, as was shown by a private of the Sussex Regiment being wounded just outside camp, where he had gone after dark.

On the morning of the 25th December the advanced guard under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Hart, C.R.E., 1st Division, left camp in the dark, so

as to be able to start work on the road by daybreak. The road was much improved by the time the main body came up, and was reported passable, the Sappers then being at work on the furthest parts of the road.

At 10.45 a.m. firing was heard on our right flank on the Aspoghar Heights, which had been picqueted by General Hammond's force, and the 45th Sikhs seemed to be having a sharp skirmish. Our right flank being thus most effectually protected, General Hart pushed on. The road across the Spinkha Heights was good, with the exception of one bad bit, but when the ascent up to the Alachi Kotal began it became rougher and very steep. The pathway lay on the side of the hill, with a precipice on one side and heights towering above us on the other; the road was narrow, steep and rough, with many twistings and turnings. Once over the Kotal, however, the descent was easy and short to Alachi village. Our road then turned off sharp to our right, entering the Alachi Gorge with inaccessible cliffs on either side, about a mile long, finally bringing us out into a large open valley, thickly covered with large walled-in houses, all of which had thin, tall, strongly built towers with solid foundations. There was one name —Karamna—shown on our map for all these. The valley was very fertile, and an abundance of grass and fodder was found, but scarcity of water was one great drawback. After leaving the Alachi Gorge the enemy began skirmishing with our advanced guard, and as Karamna was approached the resistance increased, the enemy holding the underfeatures with great tenacity, and making most remarkably good shooting. Colonel Hart accordingly determined to oust them, which was done by the 30th Punjab Infantry with great dash and spirit, their losses being one killed and two wounded. General Hart's horse, which he was riding at the time, was slightly wounded.

Karamna itself, where our Christmas night was spent, merits a word of description. The group of houses which form the village is situated in a fine open valley of rolling grass land, so rare a feature in that mountainous country as to give us a welcome and quite unusual sense of space and freedom. Each house built, as are all Afridi dwellings, of baked mud, stone and timber, stood in its own little orchard of apricot, apple, and walnut trees, the yellow of the buildings harmonising well with the green valley and the dark background of mountains. Surrounded completely by high loopholed walls, flanked with towers, the living rooms opened into spacious courtyards, a luxury in which the unusually level ground enabled the Afridi architect to indulge. Built for defence rather than comfort, the houses formed complete castles in themselves, not a window showing in the outer walls, while the few approaches were absolutely commanded from the interior. From its situation, and from the solidity, strength and size of its houses, Karamna was by far the finest Afridi village we had yet visited. As we first saw it, on emerging from the dark gorge which connects Karamna with the Alachi Pass, it looked bright and smiling enough, lit up momentarily by the weak sun which just then broke through the low-lying clouds. As we last saw it, four days later, in pouring rain, its towers in ruins, with dark clouds of smoke from the burning buildings hanging over the valley, few sights could have appeared more melancholy.

Major Smith-Dorrien, who was field officer of the day, had accompanied the advance guard, his duty being to arrange for the safety of the camp. This he at once proceeded to do by posting picquets on all the prominent heights, mostly at a distance of 1200 to 1500 yards from camp and on commanding heights, which were not in turn dominated by greater heights.

At the same time a reconnaissance was at once ordered to report on the Bori Kandao Pass, which led

straight to Landi Kotal, the distance being about eight miles. Major Wylly, in command of C, E, and F Companies, accompanied by Captains Marshall and Menzies, and Lieutenants De Kantzow and Pennell, was sent to protect the reconnaissance.

All went well until the retirement began, when F Company, which was on rear guard, came under a considerable fire from sharpshooters, who followed them up. Private A. Betts was shot dead through the head, Lance-Sergeant Samworth was severely wounded in the knee, and Private A. Warren in the hand. Poor Samworth little thought then, nor did we, that his wound was to end fatally; after a month of suffering he died at Nowshera Hospital, and the Regiment lost a smart non-commissioned officer and a good fellow.

The result of the reconnaissance was that the road up the Bori Kandao was found to be impracticable, in one place there being only steps cut in the stone across a slippery rock for about 100 yards. All idea, then, of going back by that route was abandoned.

Owing to the difficulty of the road, Major Martin, 2nd 1st Gurkhas, who commanded the rear guard, finding himself at nightfall only two miles from Lala China and at the foot of the Spinkha Pass, determined to halt where he was, and park all the baggage not yet over the pass, ensuring their safety by a system of strong picquets on the heights. General Hart himself saw the remainder of transport and baggage, who were in front of Major Martin's, into camp, lighting bonfires and keeping the road picqueted. Captain Bosanquet reached camp with the last of the picquets and baggage at eleven p.m. The picquets had had an extremely bad time of it, posted as they were on rugged heights, and when darkness came on the difficulty of withdrawing them was very great, and we may congratulate ourselves that we got off with one man slightly wounded: this was Corporal

J. Bull of G Company, during the retirement in the dark. As usual, the enemy had managed to get some shots into the last troops to retire, in this case G Company under Captain Bosanquet. This company also lost a rifle bolt and a helmet in the dark, which they went and recovered next morning.

Thus ended our Christmas Day of 1897, four casualties in the Battalion and no Christmas dinner for the men. The officers, however, who were fortunate enough not to be on picquet, managed a very respectable meal, and despite the wet and cold, and an occasional bullet, drank to "absent friends," and pitied them at the same time for being in comfortable houses!

The troops had spent a far from cheerful Christmas Day. The picqueting duty was heavy, and towards evening rain, which had been threatening all day, fell. Many of the picquets were on high hills, where they spent a cold and wet Christmas night.

A and H Companies, the former under Major Taylor, the latter under Lieutenants Leveson-Gower and Phelps, spent the night on picquet, ensuring their comrades a sound sleep. The enemy only fired a few shots during the night, and wounded one of the 30th Punjab Infantry picquet.

On December 26th our orders were to march to Berakhas (seven miles), halting at Burg (three miles) to water our animals, but in the end the whole Brigade halted at the latter place.

At daybreak B, D, C, and F Companies under Major Wylly, and four companies 30th Punjab Infantry, returned to Alachi to help our old friends the Gurkhas, under Major Martin, to bring into camp the transport which had to halt over-night. All arrived in camp by mid-day.

The picquets had been relieved at nine a.m., G and E, under Captains Bosanquet and Menzies respectively, taking the places of A and H. Previous to this the depressing task of burying poor Betts had been

carried out. The funeral service was read by the Rev. F. Kirwan, and all officers and many men, not on duty, were present. His grave was filled in and all trace of it effaced by burning straw over it, as though a fire had been made there.

Meanwhile Colonel Hart, R.E., with all the sappers at his disposal, had gone forward to repair and make the road passable, beginning work at daylight, it being arranged that he should signal back to General Hart when the road was ready for the transport. A message came back presently to say the road would be fit for animals by twelve o'clock mid-day, and so accordingly the baggage was started off. The troops and baggage left behind the previous night were now reported to have arrived at Karamna, and were ordered to halt for rest and feeding.

To deceive the enemy as to our intention, General Hart moved up and parked all remaining transport in the folds of ground above Karamna. Progress was very slow, and we, waiting for it all to move off, thought the mass of animals waiting its turn would never be disposed of. Slowly and steadily it moved, however, but it was not until 7.30 p.m. that the last of the troops and baggage had left the Karamna valley. However, General Hart decided on another night march, and issued orders for fires to be lit along the route, without which it would have been impossible to get along, as the sky was cloudy and it was pitch dark. The picquets all round the valley were left out until the baggage was clear, and then a well-timed withdrawal was made, only a few shots being fired at them, a very successful operation when it is remembered that it was done in the dark, and some of the picquets took an hour coming down from their positions.

The road to Burg was one of the worst we had met with yet. Starting over a low Kotal, it descended abruptly through a narrow gorge with cliffs towering on either hand, the baggage in places touching both

sides, and it seemed wonderful how the animals kept their footing down the slippery steep path, with here and there big boulders or loose stones. Helped by the bonfires and by the willing hands of all the troops they were at last got safely into camp.

General Hart and staff came in with the rear guard at 10 p.m., the enemy not having molested the retirement at all—and was met by General Symons, who told us that the 2nd Brigade had that day taken and burnt China, and were returning to-morrow. All of us were much disappointed at hearing this, as after all we had gone through we had hoped to have been first in the burning and sack of China. A few shots were fired into camp, and one man 30th Punjab Infantry, wounded.

On the 27th December a halt was made at Burg.

General Hart, hearing that we were not to return *via* Karamna, ordered out all his available troops with the intention of marching back to burn the fortified villages there. At twelve noon the force started, but the order was cancelled and we were ordered back, since it had been decided that we were, after all, to go back the same way.

All the morning the work of destroying the towers and villages at Burg went on. Seven towers were blown up, and the total damage was estimated at 12,000 rupees. At Burg, owing to the broken nature of the ground, the houses were not so large and striking as those at Karamna; one of them however, contained an interesting feature, which illustrates the conditions under which the Afridis live, even in the piping times of peace. Built on the crest of a low spur it was, as usual, defended by a high wall and two towers. Some few hundred yards below it, but so placed as to be quite invisible from any point in the upper house, was a second very similar building. The two neighbours had apparently quarrelled, probably as to the amount of water taken for irrigation by one or the other from the stream below. For from

one side of the upper house, a long funnel of baked clay and stone, down which a man could crawl on hands and knees, led to a rock from behind which, himself completely under cover, he could shoot at his leisure into the courtyard below. This funnel was apparently only a recent improvement to the upper house, a pile of mud stones and timber in the courtyard of the lower building showing that its owner meditated taking immediate steps to protect himself from the attentions of his enterprising neighbour.

On the 28th December the column started on their return march to Karamna. General Hart determined to march there by night, with a view to surprising the enemy, as information had reached us that the place had been reoccupied immediately after our departure on the 26th, and it was determined to make one more attempt to catch the Afridis asleep. Orders were accordingly issued on the evening of the 27th for an advance on Chura, which lies exactly in the contrary direction; and it was not until we paraded in the darkness at four on the morning of the 28th that our real destination became known. A steady downpour of rain, while it added to our discomfort, led us to hope that the enemy's watchers would not be on the alert, an Afridi disliking a long tour of sentry-go on a mountain peak in cold or rain as heartily as any English soldier. The night was still black as we struggled slowly and painfully up the Burg defile, this time without the friendly light of the bonfires, breaking our shins at every yard against the rocks with which the bed of the torrent was thickly studded. Shortly after six the advanced troops were in position overlooking the Karamna Valley, and, as we thought, the enemy had taken no alarm. A few lights seen in the valley below further excited our hopes, and led us to believe that for once we had caught our friends napping. We stood for some time wet through and shivering in the cold morning air,

waiting for the light of dawn to enable us to attack. This delay was utilised to give us our final instructions, and divide us into parties, each told off to assault a separate house. The bayonet only was to be used, and it was impressed upon the men to be very careful, in the half light of early morning, not to harm the women and children who were believed to have returned with their lords and masters. We had with us men with pickaxes and poles ready to burst open closed doors, and now as an additional precaution against barricades a few Sappers with petards were added to every party. At last about seven, the order to advance was given, and with bayonets fixed we streamed silently down the hillside into the valley and made each for the place appointed us. The village doors were mostly found to be shut, but a few sturdy blows with a pickaxe sent them flying, and in we rushed to find—nothing. Alas! the birds were flown. Karamna contained not a living soul. Once more the Afridis proved the difficulty of catching them napping. Possibly our ruse had been a little too clever, and over-reached itself. For the Politicals explained the desertion of Karamna by the theory that the enemy, imagining from information supplied by their spies in our camp that the column really was destined, as stated in orders, for Chura, had therefore collected in force in the opposite direction to oppose our advance there. This supposition was borne out by the numbers of the enemy seen watching us from the hills on the Chura side of Burg on this and the preceding day.

No one felt these continual disappointments more than the private soldier. Shot at constantly by night without a chance of returning the fire, the men never really saw their enemy except when they were themselves retiring; these frequent rear-guard actions leaving the uncomfortable impression on their minds that they were running away. It was not that the enemy did not suffer, and suffer heavily; but there is

small satisfaction to the rank and file never to be engaged except when their hands are tied by the wearisome duty of covering a long line of baggage animals toiling painfully through some mountain defile. They had no brilliant attacks or dashing charges to compensate them for long cold nights on picquet, often without food or covering; for not infrequently the extraordinary difficulties of country, or a landslip on the track, would prevent the transport completing even the shortest marches in a single day.

Before camp was pitched at Karamna the towers of all the villages were blown up—nine strong towers and twelve smaller ones, the estimated damage being 20,000 rupees.

Lieutenant Tonge, R.E., and a Naik of No. 4 Bombay Sappers were blown up through an unfortunate accident. It seems that a charge hung fire, so Lieutenant Tonge, accompanied by the Naik, went into the village. Just as they had disappeared from sight an explosion was heard, and the worst fears were found to be only too true. Lieutenant Tonge's body was taken to Peshawar for burial.

Picquets to guard the camp were as usual posted at once, and the baggage began to come in. C and F Companies, under Major Wylly and Captain Marshall, were the unfortunates for picquet that day, and a wretched time they had of it, a wet raw day being succeeded by a wetter and rawer night. Lieutenant Maurice with half of D Company was sent half way to Burg to hold some heights immediately above the road, to ensure the safety of the columns of baggage coming along it to camp. This party surprised some six Afridis moving round a flank, and accounted for three of them.

As usual, the retirement of the picquets was the signal for the immediate opening of fire from all commanding positions. They had been kept out until the tail of the transport had entered the narrow

gorge which led up to the camp at Karamna. This gorge had had picquets placed on the heights on its flank to cover the movement of the transport and troops up it. The enemy were most persistent, but owing to the way the troops were handled and to the fire of the picquets, and also that of two Mountain Battery guns and the Devons Maxim, they were unable to get any shots into the transport, and the force did extremely well to be all safe in camp by four p.m. with a loss of 21st Madras Pioneers, killed one, wounded five, Sussex wounded one, and Derbyshire wounded one.

As the baggage was coming along splendidly, General Hart determined to send on part of his force with two companies of Sappers and Miners to Alachi, under Lieutenant-Colonel Hart, R.E., for two reasons; first that it would relieve the burden of transport for the morrow's march back to Ali Masjid, and secondly to enable the Sappers to start work early on the road. The march was accomplished without opposition, but the camp at Alachi was attacked that night, the firing lasting from 1.30 a.m. to 3.15 a.m., one sepoy of the 30th Punjab Infantry being wounded.

Rain fell heavily all the afternoon and night of the 28th December, and on the morning of the 29th the weather was still threatening. The hill tops were hidden in mist, some of the higher camp picquets being concealed from view all day, which rendered the withdrawal, in the face of a watchful enemy, a delicate operation.

To give an idea of the ground these picquets were posted on, it may be mentioned that although only at some 1500 or 1600 yards range from camp, they were some 600 feet above it, and it took nearly an hour to reach either position from camp.

The withdrawal of the picquets, ten in all, had been provided for by so many G's, corresponding to the number of the picquet, being sounded by bugle, in the case of native picquets, and by flag signals for the

others, and this was carried out without a single hitch from beginning to end.

Major Smith-Dorrien had been entrusted with the control of this operation. Whilst cantering about the valley alone directing the withdrawal, he offered a tempting target to the snipers on the hills, and considering how often he was under their heavy fire at shortish ranges, he was lucky to get off with only his horse slightly wounded.

The rear-guard under command of Lieutenant-Colonel Dowse, consisting of the Derbyshire Regiment and No. 1 Kohat Mountain Battery, had taken up a position to cover the operation, and not a picquet was moved until the tail of the baggage was well on its road to Alachi, as it was known that directly any of the heights were vacated by a picquet, they would be at once occupied by the enemy, whose fire would begin to annoy. Such proved to be their tactics, and in almost every case the enemy were firing from the picquet positions within a few minutes of their being vacated.

It was in the withdrawal of these picquets that our first two men were wounded this day; the first was Lance-Corporal Allsop of H Company, who was shot in the shoulder, and a few minutes afterwards Lance-Corporal S. Morgan of A Company, who was hit on reaching the valley, after a long retirement down the hill from their picquet. The Gurkha picquets were extremely fortunate, as although they were for a considerable time under a closer and heavier fire than our own picquets, not a man was hit.

The quickness of the enemy in seizing the position just vacated by a picquet was most noticeable. Immediately the picquet had withdrawn, the Afridi sharpshooters in considerable numbers occupied the very position just vacated, a few moments afterwards. A picquet of A Company, Derby Regiment, retired from its position for a few yards, then returning to it

again, shot a wily Afridi fifty yards off, who evidently thought he was going to have some fine sport. Another incident to show the quickness of the Afridi in following up happened. A picquet who had retired a bit too soon, returned to its position, finding there several Lee-Metford solid drawn cartridges, evidently left by a sharpshooter. His haste to get away must have been great to induce him to leave any of his cartridges behind.

As soon as the valley was left, the enemy's skirmishers could be seen coming across the open, making for the smoking villages, and a good opening was here afforded to the Maxim gun under Lieutenant Kane, Devonshire Regiment, of which full advantage was taken. The tribesmen advanced boldly across the open in skirmishing order, and although many were knocked over, they succeeded in getting into the village ruins. Their skirmishing tactics were beyond all praise. Immediately the Maxim gun opened fire on them, they would lie down flat on the ground, rising and advancing again at a double when it stopped firing, and one could not help admiring their plucky advance against the storm of bullets that Lieutenant Kane, who worked the gun himself, hurled at them.

Even after the withdrawal of the picquets, which had taken over an hour, the rear-guard had to hold on to give the baggage a good start through the narrow gorge to Alachi.

Here in the most mysterious way some of the enemy had crept up and fired into the left rear of G Company, wounding Lance-Corporal Cooper and Private Hudson, both in the leg. At the narrowest part of the gorge B Company, under Lieutenant Pye, took up a position to cover the last retirement, and the Gurkha picquets from both flanks and our own rear-guard companies were gradually withdrawn behind him. At last only half of B Company was left and the order was given for them to retire. As

they jumped up to do so, Lance-Corporal Broadhurst and Private F. Carter were bowled clean over by slugs fired at close quarters. Where they came from we never discovered, but the ground was terribly rough and covered with scrub and boulders and our assailant must have been well hidden. Shots were still dropping in from distant heights, and when the two wounded men had been got back about 100 yards, it was noticed that Private F. Carter had no rifle, so Major Smith-Dorrien sang out "advance that half company and find the rifle," and without a moment's hesitation back they rushed, reoccupied their old position and searched until they found the rifle. It was well and bravely done, and as they were only greeted by bullets from the heights and not by any more slugs, we concluded that our hidden foe who had previously caused our two casualties had either bolted or had not time to reload his long weapon.

Taking back our wounded we arrived in the Alachi gorge basin, where General Hart and Colonel Dowse had already disposed Companies in commanding positions as picquets, and where we found a crush of transport, in guarding which Private H. Tyson of H Company was shot through the chest, and Private G. Cook of C Company through the arm.

The enemy kept on firing, but could not do much harm, as all commanding heights were in our hands. At the same time he managed to cause us five more casualties during the day, Lance-Corporal Fasham, Private J. Wheat, Private Redgate, and Private W. Green, all of B Company, and Private A. Turpie of E Company.

For some hours we held on to this valley, until the transport was reported clear over the Alachi pass towards Ali Masjid. Then we fell back up to the Kotal of the pass itself. There, as on leaving the Karamna plain a few hours previously, we held the Kotal and heights on both sides of it, and at 3.40 p.m. gradually retired party by party, as fast as

men could run, being covered finally by only a few rifles, which in their turn retired as fast as they could rush.

The artillery and machine gun which had been in action on the Kotal had been sent back previously to positions towards Ali Masjid. Quick though we were to get away from the position, the enemy were into it and firing at us before we were many hundred yards away, but beyond knocking off Sergeant Keary's helmet, who was standing by General Hart at the time, they did us no further damage.

The troops were successfully got down, and leaving the beaten track across the Spinkha Heights on their right, which was exposed to the enemy's fire, were directed down a nullah, which was known to lead into the ordinary road lower down. A little way down this a check in the nullah below was noticed by Major Smith-Dorrien, who was commanding the tail Companies, and rushing down to see what the delay was, he found twelve Hospital ponies in the river bed, with perpendicular walls of rock on both sides, and confronted by a nasty drop of about twenty feet. Delay meant that the enemy would cause us some casualties, so he ordered the ponies to be pushed over, commencing with the first one himself, and assisted by Surgeon-Captain Manifold.

In two or three minutes all were got down. It was a most comical sight. All were pushed over by brute force—some landed on their heads, others on their sides, one or two slithered down and landed on their legs. One with his driver who had got entangled rolled head over heels to the bottom. Marvellous to relate not one walked away lame, nor was the driver even damaged one bit!

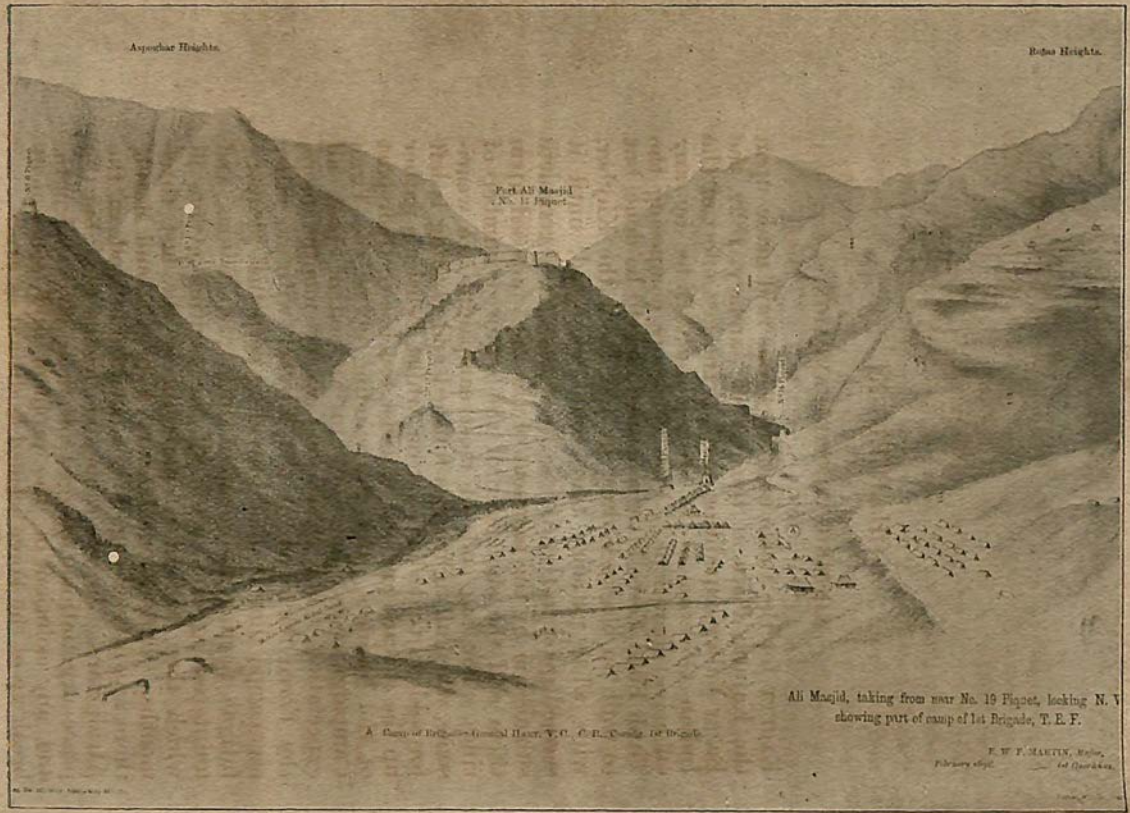
The enemy now, excepting a few shots, molested us no more, and camp at Ali Masjid was reached at six p.m. General Symons came out to meet the tail of the rear-guard, and warmly congratulated General Hart on the successful ending to a very hard day's

work. The action lasted seven hours. Our fighting General as usual came in with the last man.

During this retirement an amusing answer was heard given by a man of the Derbys to a Staff Officer who asked him if there was anyone behind him. "Yes, Sir, two Companies of the Derbys." "Is there anyone behind them?" asked the Staff Officer. "Yes, Sir, the Zakka Khels."

As was found earlier in the campaign few chances were open for firing volleys, so that throughout the retirement, individual firing was more often employed, picked shots being told off to fire as opportunity offered.

The day's casualties were only fourteen wounded, thirteen Derbys and one Gurkha, and we considered ourselves extremely fortunate to have got off so lightly, especially as all of the wounded recovered. The total losses in the 1st Brigade during the week in the Bazar valley were eight killed and thirty-six wounded, which might easily have been increased to larger numbers had any little mistake been made or if the men had behaved less well. It must be remembered that fighting took place every day, in which most of the troops were engaged at one time or another. The expedition lasted only seven days, but they were seven days of real soldiering and hard work, in cold, sunless and misty weather, through mountainous and broken country, and in face of an enemy resolutely defending their last bit of unexplored territory.



Ali Masjid, taking from near No. 19 Piquet, looking N. V
showing part of camp of 1st Brigade, T. E. F.

A Camp of Brigadier-General Hare, V.C. C.B., Comdg. 1st Brigade.

E. W. F. MARTIN, Major,
1st Gurkhas.

CHAPTER XI.

WINDING UP THE CAMPAIGN.

EXCEPT for the futile and disastrous raid made upon the Kajurai Plain at the end of January, 1899, the Bazar Valley expedition marked the last effort of the Indian Government to coerce the Afridis by any offensive operations. For the troops composing the Tirah Field Force little remained now to be done, but to wait, on blockade duty in and about the Khyber, with what patience they could command, until it seemed good to the Afridis to signify their complete submission by the payment of the fines imposed upon them and the surrender of the required number of rifles. The fag ends of most campaigns are wearisome, when all fighting is finished and nothing is left for soldiers to do but look on, whilst Politicals gather up the threads and put the last touches to their part of the business. But the winding up of the Tirah Campaign was spun out to an extent past all expectation. For three long weary months more, the Force remained in the Khyber with no other occupation than that of providing perpetual picquets, fatigue parties and similar duties; a tedious and uninteresting task after all the exciting events in which they had taken part during the last three months. Throughout January, February, and March, there was little change in the outward attitude of the Afridi clans. Jirgahs came and Jirgahs went, but the peace negotiations dragged on their endless length, and any solution of the problem and consequent break up of the Force seemed as distant as ever.

The chief cause of the delay was perhaps to be sought in the peculiar characteristics of the Zakka Khels, who alone continued to offer obstacles to a final submission of the whole Afridi tribe. It was believed that they were in truth no less anxious than the other sections of the tribe for peace, being convinced by the retention of so large a force on their borders, that an obstinate refusal on their part to come to terms would surely entail a fresh invasion of their country, and an eventual heavier punishment. But they are a race turbulent and headstrong even beyond the manner of Pathans, owning no man their master, even their own headmen, but every man a law unto himself. Consequently it was only with the utmost difficulty that the Maliks could gather together from amongst them the tale of rifles needful to fulfil the demands of Government. An Afridi's reluctance to part with his rifle can easily be appreciated when it is realised that the greater part of these weapons must come from men with blood-feuds upon their hands, to whom the sacrifice of their arms may mean sooner or later the sacrifice of their lives. Rare, indeed, is it that the tribes are not at open hostility among themselves, while within the tribe, and even within the family, blood-feuds are so common that every Afridi has more enemies than friends.

A strict code regulates the prosecution of these feuds. During seed-time or harvest, or during the progress of a Jehad (a sacred war), all quarrels are laid aside; and at all times the persons of women and children are inviolate. But with those exceptions their feuds are prosecuted with a vindictiveness to which the history of the Scottish Highlands in the wildest times can offer no parallel. During the stay of the half-battalion of the Regiment on the Sempagha Pass, an Orakzai who owned a house just below the spot occupied by one of our picquets, one day pointed out another house within twenty paces of his own,

saying that his enemy lived there. He went on to relate with the greatest pride how he had killed the father of the present owner after waiting nine whole months in his tower for a shot, his food and water being brought him by the women of the household, who also were responsible for the proper tending of the field and cattle of the estate, until this somewhat protracted stalk had been brought to a successful issue. This is a fairly representative illustration of social conditions among those amiable savages, and it is this state of affairs which makes the possession of a good rifle the dearest ambition of a frontier tribesman, a good Government Martini being always worth over three hundred rupees, an immense sum of money to a people as poor as the Afridis. Small wonder, then, that the 800 rifles demanded by Government were so long a-coming.

By slow degrees, however, the Afridi clans began to realise they were playing a losing game. The blow to their prestige, the material losses they had suffered, the hardships they and their homeless families had endured, the dread of a second invasion in the spring, aided by the strong personal influence exercised over them by Sir William Lockhart, combined to convince them that to prolong the struggle was but to lay up store of further misery and heavier retribution in the end. One by one the last of the tribes still holding out gave in, and by the end of March all fines were paid, all rifles surrendered, and the troops at last could be released from their lengthy sojourn by the Khyber and dismissed to their several stations.

Meanwhile, with the return of the Battalion at the end of December from the Bazar Valley to Jamrud, may be said to have ended the Tirah Expedition so far as the Derbyshire were concerned. Our fighting was done and there is little more of any interest to record. All began to hope that leave to India would speedily be opened, and that our early return to what

was left of the cold weather in Bareilly would soon follow.

These hopes were soon dashed to the ground by the receipt, on the 3rd of January, of orders for us to return to Ali Masjid. We marched there on the 5th, and were greeted directly we entered the pass by the well-known Khyber wind. For the next few days our time was occupied in exploring several most interesting peaks, upon which were perched the north and south picquets guarding the road respectively half way to Jamrud and to Landi Kotal, in furnishing treasure and convoy guards, and in "odd jobs" about the camp. However we were not kept very long at Ali Masjid, for on the 11th January we left for Jamrud again, which we reached after a march of three hours, at half-past two.

Our stay at Jamrud this time was responsible for a great deal of sickness among the Officers: Captain Marshall got a bad attack of jaundice, Lieutenants Pennell and Hallowes spent respectively ten days and a fortnight on the sick list, while there can be no doubt that Lieutenants Leveson-Gower, de Kantzow and Jones contracted at Jamrud the enteric fever from which the first-named only recovered.

On the 20th January a gymkhana was held on the Jamrud racecourse, which Major Smith-Dorrien had laid out, and which was now in fine order; on the following day there was a ceremonial parade; and on the 27th we returned again to Ali Masjid. The next day several of us went as far as the signal station to see the new fort now in course of construction, and to note the positions of several new picquets towards Landi Kotal.

That night orders were issued for night operations on an extensive scale; it appears that the arrangements with the few Afridi Jirgahs who had come into Jamrud were rather hanging fire, and it was thought that matters might be hastened by a grand demonstration by all four brigades. It was known that much of the cattle

belonging to the recalcitrant tribesmen was grazing in the Kajurai Plain—a valley lying between the Chura and the Bara rivers: it was accordingly arranged that the 1st Brigade should move on Chura and block the exits towards the Bazar Valley; the 2nd Brigade was to join on our left, and the 4th Brigade on to our right, working up the passes between us and Mamanai, while the 3rd Brigade, advancing from the direction of Bara, was to sweep up the Kajurai Plain, driving the herds and herdsmen towards us. The 1st Brigade left Ali Masjid at 1 a.m., in three columns: the Derbys on the right, under Major Smith-Dorrien (Colonel Dowse being on leave), moved by the road which the 2nd Brigade had followed on entering the Bazar Valley, and had reached the village of Chura in perfect silence, and had taken up positions as day broke. This column was followed by a mountain battery, a company of Sappers, and the 21st Madras Pioneers. The centre column, consisting of the 2nd Battalion 1st Gurkhas, and the left column, composed of the Royal Sussex, moved down the bed of the Khyber stream, and then turning southwards prolonged the line to our left roughly along the line of the Chura River. We found the inhabitants of Chura friendly, or at any rate peaceful, and though we heard towards afternoon heavy firing somewhere in the distance, it was impossible to locate it, and some people were even of opinion that the sound came from the heavy batteries practising at Campbellpore beyond the Indus. At one p.m. the 1st Brigade began to retire, and by five p.m. we were back at Ali Masjid, after a very long and tiring day, during which some of us must have covered twenty miles or more, and so far as we were aware, not a single beast—four-footed or two-legged—had fallen into our hands, although both the Royal Sussex and the Gurkhas claimed—with honest pride—to have, between them, accounted for one "friendly." It was not until the 31st January that we began to hear rumours of

the serious disaster which, on the 29th, had overtaken a portion of the 4th Brigade, and how that magnificent commanding-officer of a splendid regiment—Lieutenant Colonel Haughton of the 36th Sikhs—had fallen on the Shinkamar Pass.'" On the 31st, too, our time-expired men left for Deolali under charge of Lieutenant Maurice.

On the 3rd February, 2nd Lieutenants Harrington and Watson joined the service companies with a draft. On the 4th, a select party of enthusiasts made an excursion to the top of a high hill called Rohtas on the right of the pass, and on the 5th the North picquets were strengthened by eighty additional rifles, as a large party of Zakka Khel were said to be on the war-path, and were believed to be waiting for us somewhere near Gurgurra Chowki. As a number of the draft, including the two new Officers, were with us, and as all these were simply thirsting for blood, it may be imagined, but cannot possibly be described, how keen the disappointment was at finding the Khyber quite deserted! On the 7th we pitched a number of E.P. tents which had been sent up for the troops, and the enemy signalised the occasion by making a smart attack that evening on a picquet of the Sussex, one man of whom was seriously wounded. On the 9th, Captain Iggulden rejoined the Battalion from the adjutancy of the Agra Volunteers.

During the next few days there is nothing of particular note to chronicle, but the accounts we received from Bareilly and Nowshera of our enteric patients made us very anxious. Few of us had, I think, anticipated that it would go hard with poor de Kantzow, whose fine physique and active habits seemed to promise more chance of recovery to him than to others. It was a great shock to all his friends to hear that he had died at 3 p.m. on the 14th. He was buried the next day, and his funeral was attended by nearly everybody in the station, from the General downwards, and by eight of his brother officers.

On the night of the 18th February we were visited by a thunderstorm of more than ordinary severity. It broke over camp shortly after midnight, the usual hurricane being accompanied by torrents of rain, while the most superb lightning played round the mountain-sides, revealing scenes of the wildest confusion. Animals broke loose and careered terrified through the lines; tents were carried off bodily, or at best laid flat, and split into shreds; while every now and then a frantic owner could be seen chasing some cherished shirt or precious blanket which sailed away high out of his reach. Daybreak brought to light the fact that hardly a single tent was standing in camp; even the heavier mess-tents, the usual refuge of destitute officers on these occasions, had been unable to weather the storm.

On the 26th February we all visited the Alachi Pass for the first time since we left the Bazar Valley, the General being anxious to improve the road to the Kotal. Before we withdrew at 4.30—having seen no less than five Afridis—the Pioneers had improved the road beyond recognition. Next day Major General Symons arrived on a short visit, and the day after a large party of volunteers climbed to the top of the Aspoghar, the high range which rises just above the left of Ali Masjid Fort, and which flanks the road to Alachi and the Bazar Valley. We left camp at 7.30 a.m. and got back at 5.30 p.m., having had a hard climb and a tiring day. Next day was a regular Khyber day—blowing great guns and pouring with rain, and as we were still without any outer flys to our E.P. tents, the dinner which we gave that night to the two Generals and their Staffs, was carried out under difficulties which as usual were triumphed over by our accomplished mess president. On the 2nd March we woke to find the hills all round us covered with snow, and the Lala China stream being this day thrown open to anglers, several of us walked down to see the cairn which had been erected on the spot

where the body of Sir Henry Havelock-Allen had been found in January. The following day 2nd Lieutenant Hobbs, who had been invalided from the Sempagha Pass, rejoined us with 47 men.

About this time the Pioneërs had started on a new alignment for a camel road to Chura, and two or three times a week we went out to form a covering force to the working parties. On the 9th, Sir William Lockhart passed through Ali Masjid on his way to Landi Kotal, and inspected the 1st Brigade, which was drawn up in line along the road, and presented a very workmanlike appearance.

On the 10th March we all were very much distressed to hear by wire of the death that morning at Nowshera of poor young Jones from enteric fever. It was some small consolation to know that his parents were in India, and that they were able to be with him at the last. In consequence of the sad news our dinner to the 2nd Battalion 1st Gurkhas, and a gymkhana, both of which were to have taken place that day, were postponed.

On the 12th and 13th we began seriously to believe that a renewal of hostilities must shortly take place, for on the Saturday, Lieutenant Gough of the Connaught Rangers suddenly arrived in our camp, and announced that he had come to be attached to us, while on the following day in the midst of a heavy rain-storm, Captain Inglis of the Norfolk Regiment came in full of the same news. On the 14th we had a great evening; our old friends, the officers of the 2nd Battalion 1st Gurkhas came and dined with us, and we had quite a little harmony; everybody's health was drunk, most of us sang—more or less tunefully—and many of us made speeches.

On the 17th March we heard that owing to certain sections of the tribesmen having not yet given in, an immediate advance to Chura of the 1st Brigade would take place not later than the 19th, and sure enough the next morning all our camel transport arrived in

camp from Jamrud. This contemplated move seemed to bring even the Zakka Khel to their senses, for by evening Major-General Symons was able to wire to our Brigadier that all fines had been paid nearly in full, that hostages had been given for the balance, and that any further advance might be considered cancelled for good and all. On the 18th and 19th we had great sports and an excellent khud race, and on the 22nd we had a first rate sing-song at which a new performer with a charming voice—Lieutenant Gough—joined the old established favourites, the Brothers Lymn, Lance-Corporal Chart, and others. It was by now getting very hot in the day-time, so that the fine swimming bath constructed under the immediate supervision of our acting Pay-Quartermaster, was much patronised and largely appreciated. Saturday to Monday trips to Landi Kotal were now the order of the day, and many Officers and men took advantage of the leave so freely given to visit the immediate borders of Afghanistan. On the 24th we dined—a merry family—with the Gurkhas, and the next day Lieutenant Maclean of the 93rd Highlanders arrived with a party of 49 men for us. The next few days were full of rumour, but at last late on the evening of the 30th, we received our orders to return once more to Jamrud.

On the following morning Captain Green, who had been out of health for some days, went down to Nowshera: that day we were all busy preparing for our march down the following morning, and hardly any of us had time to attend the last gymkhana of the season. We had meant to leave soon after six, but many of the mules arrived very late, and it was 6.40 before we were able to make a start. Brigadier General Hart and all his staff came to see us off—as did many others of our comrades of the first Brigade, and played out by the drums of the Sussex, we turned our backs upon Ali Masjid for the last time.

Before the Regiment marched off General Hart

inspected it, and bade good-bye to us in the following words:—

Colonel Dowse and 2nd Battalion, Derbyshire Regiment,—We have served together for nearly six months in this campaign, and now the time has come for us to part. I shall always recall with pleasure the cheerful and willing support you have given me. You have maintained the honour, the good name, and the traditions of a famous regiment. I wish you all a hearty farewell, and you carry with you my best wishes for your future welfare and happiness. I shall miss you very much indeed.

Three hearty cheers were then given for General Hart, and another for "luck;" then the Battalion marched off, looking as fine a body of men as one could wish to see anywhere. The companies when passing General Hart for the last time, gave him three more cheers spontaneously.

Jamrud we found as usual full of shaves, and also full of flies and dust. 2nd Lieutenant Watson captained three football teams, which played the Queens—the East Yorkshire having taken our place at Ali Masjid, and at last on Sunday the 3rd of April, we received definite orders that we were to begin moving down country on the Tuesday. Next day we struck nearly all the tents which had to be returned to store, and once more the men bivouacked in the open. On Tuesday the 5th, we paraded at 6.30 a.m., and were inspected by Major General Symons commanding the first Division, who also bade the Regiment a kindly farewell, alluding to their excellent behaviour under all circumstances throughout the campaign, and saying they had nobly maintained the good name of the corps.

After a wonderfully cool march for the time of year, we reached Peshawar at ten a.m., and were accommodated for the day in the double-storeyed barracks, where Brigadier General Elles, commanding at Peshawar, paid us a visit during the course of the day.

There remains but very little left to tell: we

started that evening from Peshawar in two troop trains, the first containing the head-quarters with the right-half Battalion and the following Officers, viz., Lieutenant-Colonel Dowse, Major Wylly, Captain Iggulden, Lieutenants Mortimore, Keller, Pennell, and Hobbs; the other train with Major Smith-Dorrien, Captains Inglis and Menzies (attached), 2nd Lieutenants Hallowes, Harrington, and Watson, and Surgeon-Captain Barnett, and the left-half Battalion. We stopped as usual at Rawul Pindi, Mian Mir, and Umballa, and had on the whole a wonderfully cool and comfortable journey. Bareilly was reached on the morning of the 9th, and we were played in by the bands of the 12th Bengal Infantry and 14th Bombay Infantry. Glad enough were we all to settle down again to cantonment life after having spent six months and eighteen days in the field.

It is not probable that any single officer or man from among the troops composing the Tirah Field Force experienced any other sensations at the close of the campaign and the break up of the Force than those of unalloyed and unfeigned thankfulness. Doubtless the objects with which the campaign was undertaken were eventually attained in the face of difficulties, of which the numerous gentlemen who sat at ease at home and criticised the conduct of it so severely, could form no conception. But it cannot be pretended that there was much satisfaction to be got out of such a campaign by the troops engaged in it. Up to a certain point, the arrival of the force at their objective in Tirah within a fortnight of the first start, things went merrily enough. Hardships there were to be borne, and fatigue, hunger and thirst, sleepless nights in bitter cold; but, with all this, the consciousness of a definite object ahead to be fought for, and a continual progress with many a good fight towards that end. Then came all those weeks of seemingly purposeless delay in Tirah, a dreary monotony broken only by the news of some fresh reverse; next the

harassing; undignified retreat from Tirah, and last, a dull period of three long months on blockade duty in the Khyber. Never, except at Dargai, a good stand-up fight, a brilliant charge, an honest cheerful engagement; rarely a certainty of having inflicted on the enemy losses heavier, or even as heavy, as those we suffered ourselves.

The close of a campaign often leaves behind with victors and vanquished alike, a legacy of increased mutual liking and respect. The Afridi may be presumed to have been taught now to regard the soldiers of the Queen with higher respect than before. Immediately terms of peace were finally concluded, they flocked in greater numbers than ever to enlist in native regiments; and that astounding scene at Peshawar railway station—on Sir William Lockhart's departure for England, when some five hundred Afridis crowded round his carriage with wildly enthusiastic acclamations to the man who had so recently scourged their country with fire and sword—bore ample testimony to the esteem in which they held their conqueror. Yet it can hardly be said that a closer acquaintance with the Afridi added much to our liking or admiration for his personal characteristics. The home newspapers during the war were rather given at one time to speaking of the "Gallant Afridis." Gallantry is an attribute more commonly associated with an enemy who, like the Baggara horseman of the Sudan, will meet his opponent face to face in the open with a reckless and magnificent scorn of death, rather than with one whose methods, admirably as they are adapted to the ends in view, consist in a most unheroic skulking behind rocks, firing into camps at night, or falling upon the tail end of weary baggage guards. Recent experiences of the Afridis fully bear out an estimate of their character given some years ago in Paget and Mason's "Record of the Expeditions against the North-West Frontier Tribes,"—"Ruthless, cowardly robbery; cold-blooded,

treacherous murder, are to an Afridi the salt of life. Brought up from his earliest childhood amid scenes of appalling treachery and merciless revenge, nothing can ever change him; as he has lived—a shameless, cruel savage—so he dies; and it would seem that notwithstanding their long intercourse with the British, and the fact that very large numbers of them have been or are in our service, and must have learnt in some poor way what faith and mercy and justice are, yet the Afridi character is no better than it was in the day of his fathers." A typical instance of their ferocious brutality occurred on the Samana early in October. On the morning that Fort Saragheri was captured, three unarmed followers of the Sikh garrison had gone out from Fort Gulistan to collect firewood, and never returned. A day or two later their bodies were discovered. They had been tied together and burnt alive!

Nevertheless, though the characteristics of the tribe are thus marked by a blood-thirsty ferocity surpassing even the ordinary cruelty and treachery of Pathans, it is impossible to withhold from the Afridis the tribute of admiration due to their consummate skill in the conduct of that peculiar form of guerilla warfare for which their country is so eminently adapted. Now that to their former mobility, fleetness of foot, accurate knowledge of ground and power of taking every possible advantage of that knowledge, they have added the possession of arms as good as our own, the Afridis form in their mountain fastnesses, where every march is practically through a defile from beginning to end, as formidable opponents as British troops are ever called upon to face. Fully aware that in open fight they would stand no chance of success, they rarely attempted to oppose our advance, but bided their time until the inevitable retirement gave them the opportunity they were so quick to seize. "A nation of skilled marksmen, masters of guerilla warfare, amply provided with

arms and ammunition, and inhabiting a country as difficult as any in the world," for months they baffled the utmost efforts of our most experienced frontier officers, and set at defiance the might of the British Empire. Nor, though in the end they were persuaded that it was their wisest policy to submit to the terms of the Indian Government, were they ever brought to their knees by any such crushing defeat as usually decides the issue of a campaign. The final result was perhaps in a large measure due to the personal influence among them of Sir William Lockhart, and to his unwearied patience in the pursuit of his end. Though the circumstances were widely different, the line in which the old Roman poet described how the General, nicknamed the Cunctator, finally overthrew the power of Hannibal,

"Unus homo nobis cunctando restituit rem,"

might be not inaptly applied to the policy by which the Afridis were at last driven to surrender.

In his despatches, published on the 4th March, Sir William Lockhart summarises the results attained by the expedition as follows: "The troops under my command have marched everywhere within the Orakzai and Afridi limits, and the whole of Tirah has now for the first time been accurately surveyed. Our enemies wherever encountered have been punished, and their losses are stated on unimpeachable evidence to have been extremely severe. The towers and walls of almost every fortified village in the country have been levelled to the ground, and the winter supply of grain, fodder, and fuel of both tribes has been consumed by the force. The Orakzai have been completely subdued and have complied with the terms prescribed for them, but the Afridis still hold out, although I have strong hopes" (which were almost immediately afterwards fulfilled) "that they may before long submit, and thus save their country from a fresh invasion in the spring."

The casualties of the campaign are variously stated by different authorities, mostly purporting to base their numbers on official returns. So far as can be ascertained, the following figures, quoted by Colonel Hutchinson, appear to be reliable. The killed, of all ranks, numbered 287, the wounded 853; and 10 more, who in all probability should be included among the killed, were returned as "missing," the total amounting to 1150. Of British Officers 23 were killed and 56 wounded; whilst 4 Native Officers were killed and 16 wounded. These are the casualties that occurred on the actual field of battle. Unfortunately they represent considerably less than half the total of losses directly attributable to the campaign. Fever, dysentery, and the various other diseases incidental to warfare, accounted for close on 500 additional lives, and a further enormous reduction of effective strength from invaliding.

Up to February 18th no less than 20 Officers, 200 British and 250 Native soldiers, were reported as having died from disease. What the number of the sick may have been would be very difficult to calculate, but the total must have been counted not in hundreds, but thousands. The Indian medical authorities, in making provision for the needs of the sick and wounded of the Tirah and other expeditions before operations were begun, based their calculations on the assumption that hospital accommodation would be required for twelve per cent. of the troops and followers. On this basis 6526 beds were made available, including thirty-six and a-half field hospitals, of which twenty-three were for the use of the Tirah Force. The accuracy of this forecast may be gauged from the fact that on the 26th December, 1897, the number of sick in hospital, then at its highest, was 11.16 per cent. of the force. On that date therefore there must have been about 6000 men in hospital, sick and wounded, and for every wounded man admitted eleven were admitted suffering from sickness of one

sort or another. No doubt a considerable proportion of these men were merely temporarily admitted, and returned to duty with their corps without even being sent back to one of the two base hospitals at Nowshera or Rawul Pindi. Moreover, over a third of those sent back sick to a base hospital were able to rejoin the force in Tirah, if at least the figures afforded by an examination of the return of a single regiment may be taken as a guide to the general average.

Of the Derbyshire Regiment 1027 men took part at one time or another in the Tirah Expedition, though some 200 of those only arrived at the front for the first time in February and March, too late for any actual fighting. In addition to these, ninety-two more were left at the depôt at Bareilly. Just before the time-expired men left for home in March, 1898, the actual strength of the regiment in India therefore reached a total of slightly over 1100. Now the Derbys were an exceptionally healthy regiment, having gone on field service from a particularly healthy station. Yet out of the 1027 men who went on service, which number should for these calculations probably be reduced by about 200, as that proportion only joined when the campaign was practically over, no less than 309 were not merely admitted to field hospitals but so sick as to necessitate their being sent back to the base hospitals in India, exclusive of twenty-three who were sent back badly wounded. It is worth noting, as tending to show that a prolonged sojourn in India, instead of seasoning and hardening the soldier, renders him the less able to withstand the rigours of campaigning, that whilst the average age of the whole 1027 was 24 years and 4 months, that of the 309 sent back sick was 25 years and 6 months. 124 of these sick and 3 of the wounded were able to rejoin the Regiment during the course of the operations, and the effective strength was further increased by the arrival at various times of drafts, composed chiefly of young soldiers just landed in

India, amounting to 247 men. So that from beginning to end 374 men joined or rejoined the battalion whilst on service. The highest figures that the parade states ever shewed during the campaign were naturally at the very beginning, before we left Shinawari, when the strength was twenty-one Officers, exclusive of two attached, and 787 Non-commissioned Officers and men. Sixteen Officers of the Regiment, and 555 Non-commissioned Officers and men fought at Dargai.

The following table shows the casualties of the battalion during the expedition:—

	Officers.	Sergeants.	Rank and File.
Killed in action ...	1	0	4
Died of wounds ...	0	0	4
Died of disease ...	2	2	11
Wounded	1	2	31
Total	4	4	50

Of the 19 Officers, 33 Sergeants, and 767 rank and file who left Bareilly with the Battalion on 22nd September, 1897, or a few days afterwards wtih B Company, only 7 Officers, 27 Sergeants, and 495 rank and file returned to Bareilly with the battalion.

5 Officers, 23 Sergeants, and 384 rank and file served uninterruptedly with the Battalion throughout the campaign without a day's absence from duty.

In conclusion, some of Sir William Lockhart's last words on the Tirah Campaign may here be fittingly quoted.

On handing over the command of what remained of the Tirah Force to General Symons, previous to sailing for England on the 9th April, he issued the following farewell order.

CAMP PESHAWAR,
4th April, 1898.

SPECIAL ORDER.

On relinquishing the command of the Tirah Expeditionary Force, which is about to be reduced to a single Division,

I thank all ranks for the work which, through their bravery and devotion, has been successfully accomplished in the past six months.

From the beginning of October to the middle of January the force was engaged in active operations, and seldom have troops been called to undergo greater fatigue, or to meet a more vigilant and enterprising enemy. After long marches in cold and wet, harassed by distant rifle-fire and by assaults at close quarters, the columns bivouacked in positions which had to be protected by numerous strong picquets posted on commanding heights, and those picquets were always liable to determined attacks, and to molestation in withdrawal. There was in fact, little or no rest for the force, the most carefully chosen Camping Ground being generally open to long range fire from scattered individual marksmen, armed with the most accurate weapons.

The boast of the Tribes was that no foreign army, Moghal, Afghan, Persian, or British, had ever penetrated, or could ever penetrate their country; but, after carrying three strong positions, and being for weeks subsequently engaged in daily skirmishes, the troops succeeded in visiting every portion of Tirah, a fact which will be kept alive in the minds of future generations by ruined forts and towers in their remotest valleys.

In this recognition of the gallantry and devotion of all ranks, British and Indian, I include the contingent sent by the Princes and Chiefs of India, corps which have fought side by side with the troops of the regular army, and have shared in the dangers and hardships of the Campaign.

For the past two and a-half months the troops have been employed on the tedious duties of a blockade, and their discipline during this period is deserving of high commendation.

I congratulate the soldiers under my command on the successful result of the operations. In no previous campaign on the North-West Frontier have the difficulties to be overcome been more formidable; in none has the punishment inflicted on the Tribesmen been more exemplary, or their submission more complete.

W. S. A. LOCKHART, General,
Commanding Tirah Expeditionary Force.

In his final despatch published on the 4th March, describing the operations during November, December, and January, Sir William Lockhart writes:—

In bringing this narrative to a close I wish to record my high appreciation of the conduct of the British and Native troops serving with the Tirah Expeditionary Force. Up to the

present date their losses have amounted to 1050 killed and wounded. They have been subjected to hardships and exposure, harassed at night by assaults at close quarters or by distant rifle-fire, and engaged in long and trying rearguard actions. Their duties on picquet and in guarding foraging parties have been specially onerous. Hardly a day or night has passed without casualties, and whether we advanced or retired every soldier had constantly to be on the alert against the enemy, who made no stand in the open but were unrivalled as skirmishers or marksmen. The operations were carried out in a country which offered every natural advantage to the tribesmen, and imposed upon regimental officers and rank and file the necessity for individual initiative, unremitting watchfulness, and personal activity. I am glad to say the troops responded nobly to the call made upon them.

Cheerful and soldierlike under exceptionally trying conditions, officers and men upheld to the utmost the traditions of their corps and the honour of Her Majesty's Army.

APPENDIX.

Roll of Officers who served with the 2nd Battalion Derbyshire Regiment during the Tirah Campaign :—

Rank.	Name.	Remarks.
Lt.-Colonel	Dowse, E. C.	
Major	Smith-Dorrien, H. L., D.S.O.	
,,	Taylor, F. E. V. ...	
,,	Wylly, H. C.	Served continuously throughout campaign
Captain	Bowman, H. J. ...	Severely wounded
,,	Iggulden, H. A. ...	
,,	Bosanquet, L. A. ...	Served continuously throughout campaign
,,	Marshall, W. R. ...	
Capt. & Adjt.	Green, T. H. M. ...	
Captain	Slessor, A. K.	
,,	Smith, W. E. C. ...	Killed in action
Capt. & Qr.-Mr.	Riddell, A. E.	
Lieutenant	Leveson-Gower, P. ...	
,,	Phelps, M. P.	
,,	Pye, W. E.	
,,	de Kantzow, S. I. ...	Died of disease
,,	Mortimore, C. R. ...	Served continuously throughout campaign
,,	Maurice, F. B.	
,,	McKinnon, L.	Served continuously throughout campaign
,,	Pennell, H. S.	
,,	Keller, R. H.	Served continuously throughout campaign
,,	Jones, F. G.	Died of disease
,,	Ritchie, J. F.	
,,	Way, B. G. V.	
,,	Hobbs, C. J. W. ...	
,,	Attfield, H. K.	
,,	Hallowes, J. H. ...	
2nd Lieut.	Harrington, C. D. M. ...	
,,	Watson, H. F.	

Officers attached to the Battalion.

Rank.	Name.	Remarks.
Captain	Menzies, G. F.... ...	2nd S. Lancashire Rgt.
	Inglis, W. R.	1st Batt. Norfolk Rgt.
Lieutenant	Gough, H. W.... ...	2nd Batt. Connaught Rangers
,,	Maclean, C. H. H. ...	2nd Batt. Argyll and Sutherland Highlds.
2nd Lieut.	McEuen, J. S.	1st Batt. Scottish Rffs.

In addition to the above Major E. A. G. Gosset, of the Battalion, served in the campaign as A.Q.M.G. of the 1st Division.

Roll of Warrant Officers and Sergeants who served with the 2nd Battalion Derbyshire Regiment during the Tirah Campaign.

No.	Rank and Name.	Coy.	Remarks.
199	Qr.-Mr.-Sgt. Davis, F. ...		
1015	Color-Sergt. Lowe, E. ...		
3369	,, Tobbell, A. ...	A.	Promoted during campaign.
2585	Sergeant Gray, R. ...		
526	,, Keary, D. ...		
1185	,, Coulsey, R. ...		
668	Color-Sergt. Saddington, W...		
2586	Sergeant Glover, G. ...		
2839	,, Parr, J. ...		Severely wounded.
2655	,, Plair, C. ...	B.	
1283	,, Hardwick, A. ...		
2817	,, Alcock, H. ...		
2510	,, Lovatt, E. ...		
2165	,, White, H. ...		Promoted during campaign.
2574	Color-Sergt. Turner, W. ...		
4349	Sergeant Storrie, R. ...		
1737	,, George, T. ...	C.	
2229	,, Howard, W ...		
2731	,, Halliday, H. ...		

No.	Rank and Name.		Coy.	Remarks.
579	Color-Sergt.	Keeling, J. ...		Severely wounded.
564	Sergeant	Girling, H. ...		
2905	„	Pullen, E. ...	D.	
2623	„	Jackson, W. ...		
4292	„	Meek, A. ...		Promoted during campaign.
1400	Color-Sergt. (O.R.Sgt.)	Tomlinson, F. ...		
1254	Color-Sergt.	Haynes, S. ...		Promoted during campaign.
1970	Sergeant	Hallam, A. ...	E.	
655	„	Rippon, G. ...		
3013	Sergt.-Dr.	O'Flaherty, J. ...		
1187	Sergeant	Hardy, H. ...		
2279	„	Norman, G. ...		
3184	Color-Sergt.	George, C. ...		
4205	„	Rogers, W. ...		Promoted during Campaign.
3329	Band-Sergt.	Bruce, J. ...		
1303	Sergeant	Elliott, J. ...	F.	
2951	„	Cooper, W. ...		
978	„	Dames, J. ...		
501	Pion.-Sergt.	Blanchard, G. ...		
3337	Sergt.-Dr.	Farmer, J. ...		Promoted during Campaign.
456	Color-Sergt.	Skinner, E ...		
2170	Sergeant	Aldred, T. ...	G.	
1931	„	Pepper, J. ...		
2514	„	Hopcroft, A. ...		
4204	Sergt.-Maj.	Hicken, J. ...		
1251	Color-Sergt.	Shepherd, J. ...		
307	Sergeant	Yarnold, W. ...		
1790	„	Wildgoose, J. ...	H.	
4296	„	Mercer, J. ...		
1365	„	Housley, W. ...		Promoted during
697	Arm.-Sergt.	Riches-Getten, R.		Campaign.

2ND BATTALION DERBYSHIRE REGIMENT.

Roll of Officers and Non-Commissioned Officers and Men of the above Corps, killed in action, mortally wounded, and wounded during the Tirah Campaign.

KILLED IN ACTION.

No.	Rank and Name.	Coy.	Place.	Remarks.
	Captain Smith, W. E. C.	D	Dargai ...	
4755	Private Dunn, G. ...	D	„ ...	
3255	„ Tweed, F. ...	E	„ ...	
4212	„ Renton, T. ...	B	„ ...	
5592	„ Betts, A. ...	F	Karamna ...	

MORTALLY WOUNDED.

2732	Private Ponberth, R. ...	D	Dargai ...	
3584	„ Eyre, S. ...	A	Khorappa ...	
3549	L.-Corp. Orton, C. ...	A	„ ...	
3421	L.-Sgt. Samworth, J. ...	F	Karamna ...	

WOUNDED.

	Captain Bowman, H. J.	E	Mastura ...	Severely.
2839	Sergeant Parr, J. ...	B	Dargai ...	„
579	„ Keeling, J. ...	D	„ ...	„
3392	Private Spick, J. ...	D	„ ...	„
4448	„ Gilder, A. ...	D	„ ...	„
5064	„ Cook, A. ...	H	„ ...	„
4190	„ Hucker, W. ...	B	„ ...	„
4232	„ Walters, J. ...	B	„ ...	„
4482	„ Addinall, T. ...	A	Khorappa ...	Dangerously
4454	„ Hacklett, R. ...	A	„ ...	Severely.
4702	„ Sleight, C. ...	B	„ ...	„
3480	L.-Corp. Barnes, A. ...	B	„	
3400	„ Westerman, E.	D	„	
3972	„ Young, A. ...	E	„	Severely.
3521	Private Wood, C. ...	G	Ghandaki	Severely.
4499	„ Holden, J. ...	D	Waran Vall'y	Severely.
3706	„ Redgate, H. ...	B	„	
4958	„ Edinborough, H	F	Sapri Pass...	Severely.
4013	„ Warren, A. ...	F	Karamna ...	
3156	Corpl. Bull, F. ...	G	„	

No.	Rank and Name.	Coy.	Place.	Remarks.
2424	Private Dalton, E. ...	B	Burg ... During retirement from	
4661	L.-Corp. Morgan, S. ...	A	Karamna	Severely.
1173	„ Broadhurst, D.	B	„	
4606	„ Fasham, C. ...	B	„	
3272	„ Cooper, H. ...	G	„	Severely.
2433	Private Cook, G. ...	C	„	Severely.
4857	„ Wheat, J. ...	B	„	Severely.
3933	„ Turpie, A. ...	E	„	Severely.
3976	L.-Corp. Allsopp, J. ...	H	„	Severely.
3706	Private Redgate, H. ...	B	„	
3142	„ Green, W. ...	B	„	
3255	„ Carter, F. ...	B	„	Severely.
3640	„ Hudson, H. ...	G	„	Severely.
3474	„ Tyson, H. ...	H	„	Dangerously

2ND BATTALION DERBYSHIRE REGIMENT.

Roll of Officers, Non-Commissioned Officers, and Men of the above Corps who died of disease during the Tirah Campaign.

No.	Rank and Name.	Coy.	Disease.	Remarks.
	Lieut. de Kantzow, S. I.	F	Enteric fever ...	
	„ Jones, F. G. ...	B	„	
5040	Private Lumsden, W. ...	D	Heat apoplexy...	
2699	Sergt. Doy, R.... ...	E	Ptomaine poison	
3575	L.-Corp. Snarey, G. ...	D	Remittent fever	
4851	Private Cross, W. ...	A	Dysentery ...	
97	Sergt. Regan, J. ...	H	Enteric fever ...	
4383	Private Vincent, A. ...	B	Bronchitis ...	
3798	Private Hague, J. ...	G	Dysentery ...	
4066	L.-Sgt. Brocking, F. O.	H	Enteric fever ...	
4660	L.-Corp. Hughes, W. ...	B	„	
5285	Private Dyson, A. ...	F	„	
4402	Private Archer, J. ...	E	Diarrhœa ...	
3608	L.-Corp. Lewis, G. ...	C	Abscess of liver	
5351	Private Langton, T. ...	H	Enteric fever ...	

HONOURS FOR THE CAMPAIGN.

The following officers were mentioned in despatches:—

Lieut.-Colonel E. C. Dowse
Major H. L. Smith-Dorrien, D.S.O.
Lieutenant H. S. Pennell.

Of these the second-named received a brevet lieut.-colonelcy, while the last was awarded the Victoria Cross.

The following men received the medal for "Distinguished Conduct in the Field":—

Colour-Sergeant J. Keeling.
Private W. Spick.

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